

# HISTORY OF India

FROM BEGINNING TO 1526 A.D.



VIDYA DHAR MAHAJAN

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From Beginning to 1526 A.D.

By

**VIDYA DHAR MAHAJAN**

M.A. (Hons.), Ph.D.



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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

I have great pleasure in putting the second edition of the book in the hands of the readers. The pressing demands of the press did not allow me to revise the book but I have re-written the chapter on the Bhakti Movement. I have no doubt that the new chapter will be welcomed by the readers.

Suggestions for the improvement of the book in the next edition will be welcomed.

III-M/10, Lajpat Nagar,  
New Delhi-24.

26-1-1973.

VIDYA DHAR MAHAJAN

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

I had written a book on Ancient India. I had written a book on Muslim Rule in India. I had written a book on British Rule in India. I had also published a book entitled 'India Since 1526.' The last book has been very popular. There was no one book dealing with the period from the beginning up to 1526. It is with a view to fill in that gap that the present book is being published.

I have tried to make the book as comprehensive as possible and I have no doubt that the students will find all that they require in this book. A large number of maps have also been given to facilitate the study of this period.

I welcome suggestions for the improvement of the book in the next edition.

III M/10, Lajpatnagar,  
New Delhi-24.

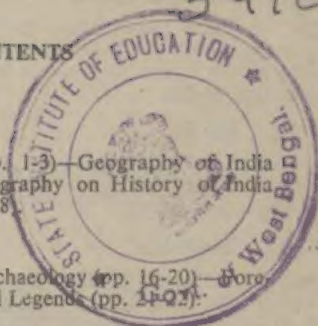
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

Before actually studying the history of Ancient India, it seems desirable to know how its history has been built up during the last two centuries. It is rightly said that the foundations of Indology were laid by Sir William Jones (1746-94) who was a judge of the Supreme Court of Calcutta. Sir William was a linguistic genius. When the Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded in 1784, Sir William Jones was persuaded to become its President. The Society started a journal called *Asiatic Researches* and in it appeared the translations of important Sanskrit works. Sir William Jones himself translated Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* and *Mahabharata*. Mr. Anquetil Duperron, a French scholar, published translations of four Upanishads from a seventeenth century Persian version. These translations created great interest in Sanskrit literature among European scholars.

Max Muller (1823-1900), a great German Sanskrit scholar, studied the Vedas and published a new edition of the *Rigveda*. He was also responsible for the "Sacred Books of the East" series which gave English translations of a very large number of the books held sacred by the Hindus and the Buddhists.

James Prinsep, an official of the Calcutta Mint and Secretary of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, was responsible for deciphering the Brahmi script. He was also able to read the edicts of Asoka. Alexander Cunningham was the Archaeological Surveyor of India from 1862 to 1885. It was through his guidance that many ancient buildings were surveyed and many inscriptions were read and translated into English.

Lord Curzon appointed John Marshall as the Director General of Archaeology and the latter spent a life-time in helping the cause of archaeology in India. It was during his regime that excavations were made at Taxila, Sarnath, Nalanda, Sanchi and other historic sites. It was also under his supervision that excavations were carried out at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. It was he who wrote his monumental work on the Indus Civilization. In addition to this, separate manuals were published on places like Taxila, Sarnath etc. Sir John Marshall contributed a chapter on the Monuments of Ancient India in *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I.

Christian Lassen (1800-76) was Professor of Indian Languages and Literature at the University of Bonn. He took interest in the work of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He made an independent attempt to decipher the Brahmi script. He published four volumes of *Indische Alterthumskunde* between 1847 and 1861. Each volume covered more than a thousand pages. The work has been described as "one of the world's greatest monuments of untiring industry and critical



scholarship". It is rightly considered to be a mile-stone in the progress of the science of Indology.

Poussin (1869-1938) was for a long time Professor of Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin at the University of Ghent. He was an authority on Buddhism. His works are known for their thoroughness and critical approach. He believed that most of our knowledge of ancient India was such as could be changed as a result of further researches. He had a deep realization of the true character of Ancient Indian Civilization.

Emile Senart and Sylvain Levi, two French scholars, made valuable contributions to the study of Ancient Indian History. V.A. Smith (1848-1920) was a member of the Indian Civil Service. He rose to the rank of a Commissioner. He retired in 1900. In 1904, he published the first edition of "Early History of India". The second and third editions were published in 1908 and 1914. The fourth edition was published in 1924 after his death. In 1911, he published "History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon". In 1919, he published "Oxford History of India". He also published monographs on Asoka and Akbar. Professor E.J. Rapson has also made a great contribution to the history of Ancient India. He was the editor of the first volume of Cambridge History of India. Dr. F.W. Thomas, Dr. A.B. Keith, Dr. Rhys Davids, Dr. Winternitz, Dr. Jolly, McCrindle, Pargiter etc. have made their contributions to various aspects of Ancient Indian History. Dr. A.L. Basham is at present doing a lot of work on Ancient Indian History.

As regards the Indian scholars, Bhagwanlal Indraji, Bhau Daji and Rajendralal Mitra made valuable contributions to the study of Ancient Indian History during the nineteenth century. Their main work was one of editing inscriptions and manuscripts.

Sir R.G. Bhandarkar (1837-1925) was the earliest important Indian historian of Ancient India. He was a versatile scholar. He was the author of "The Early History of The Deccan" and "A Peep into the Early History of India". Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar was also a great scholar. His monumental work was on Asoka.

Dr. K.P. Jayaswal (1881-1937) was not only a lawyer but also a great scholar of Sanskrit. In 1918, he published his famous book "Hindu Polity". It was a very great success and is read even now with great interest. While editing the Buddhist text of Manjushri-mulkaipa, Shri Jayaswal added a long introduction in English and gave the book the name of "An Imperial History of India". He also wrote "History of India, A.D. 150 to A.D. 350". It is true that some of his interpretations are not accepted today but he did a lot of pioneer work in various fields of ancient Indian History.

Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji made a lot of contribution to the study of ancient Indian History. The important books written by him are History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity, Local Government in Ancient India, Fundamental Unity of India, Men and Thought in Ancient India, Hindu Civilization, Asoka, Harsha, Chandragupta Maurya, etc.

Dr. H.C. Raychaudhuri is the famous author of "Political History of Ancient India". The first edition of this book was published in 1923 and it has gone into very many editions after that. According to Dr. A.L. Basham, "The book is, in fact, a work of research, not only gathering together the data of earlier scholars but making original contributions in almost every chapter. Raychaudhuri's brilliant attempt at making sense of the very tenuous data of the pre-Buddhist period earned the unqualified praise of de la Vallee Poussin and his chronology of this period is, in my opinion, the only one which has only the likelihood of approximating to truth. In many other respects, the Political History of Ancient India shows itself to be the work of a first class mind" (Studies in Indian History and Culture, p.224). It has rightly been said that this book has affected the historical thinking of a whole generation of Indians.

Dr. R.C. Majumdar is another historian of Ancient India whose contribution to the study of ancient Indian History cannot be ignored. He is the editor of the many volumes on Ancient Indian History published by the Bharatiya Vidyabhawan. In this connection, the Vedic Age, the Age of Imperial Unity, the Classical Age, and the Age of Imperial Kanauj are important. He is also co-author with Dr. Altekar of "The Vakataka—Gupta Age". Dr. Majumdar has also written a lot on Greater India. His important works are Champa (1927), Suvarna-dweep, Kambujdesa (1944), etc.

Dr. D.C. Sircar was at one time the Government Epigraphist. He has written a large number of books and articles on various aspects of Indian Epigraphy. He has published a book entitled "Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization". It contains the original text along with notes. Professor K.A. Nilakanta Sastri has made a big contribution to the study of ancient Indian History. His important works are "The Cholas", "Studies in Chola History and Administration", "History of South India," "Foreign Notices of South India", "Sri Vijaya", "India: A Historical Survey", "Sources of Indian History", etc.

Dr. A.S. Altekar was a great scholar. He was the author of "The Rashtrakutas and Their Times" and "State and Government in Ancient India". He was co-author with Dr. R.C. Majumdar of "The Vakataka-Gupta Age". R. Shama Sastri was the famous editor and translator in English of Kautilya's Arthashastra. Dr. B.C. Law did a lot of work on Buddhism. Dr. T.V. Mahalingam has done a lot of work on South Indian History. Dr. Dasratha Sharma has written a lot on various aspects of ancient Indian History. Shri C. Sivaramamurti, formerly the Director of the National Museum, has published many books on various aspects of art in Ancient India.

### Geography of India

India is a vast country. At one time, it measured about 2500 miles from East to West and 2000 miles from North to South. It had 6000 miles of land-frontier and 5000 miles of sea-frontier. Its area was about 20 lakh sq. miles which was two-thirds of the United States and 20 times the size of Great Britain. After the partition of

India in 1947, its size was reduced by one-third but even now it is fairly big.

Geographically, India can be divided into four clear-cut regions : (1) The first region consists of the northern mountains with their western and eastern ranges and their slopes comprising the present area of Kashmir, Siwalik, Tehri-Garhwal, Kumaon, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. This region covers an area which is about 1500 miles long and 150 to 200 miles broad. (2) The second region consists of the northern plains irrigated by the Indus and Ganga system of rivers. They are famous for their rich soil and fertility. No wonder, great empires were founded in this region. (3) The third region consists of the plateau of Central India and the Deccan. The Narmada and the Tapti flow from the east to the west and the other rivers of this region flow from west to east. The rivers become dry and unnavigable during the dry season. The Vindhya and the Satpuras separate northern India from the Deccan. (4) The fourth region consists of the long but narrow strip of plains situated between the sea and the Eastern and Western Ghats. These plains are about 1000 miles long. In the West, they are between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats and Konkan and Malabar are there. In the East, the plains are between the Bay of Bengal and the Eastern Ghats and the Coromandel Coast lies in these plains.

It is interesting to note that the plains from the Yamuna to the Brahmaputra were called the Madhyadesha or the Mid-lands. This region was the seat of Aryan culture. The north-western India was called the Uttarapatha. Western India was called the Pratichya or Aparanta. Eastern India was called the Prachya and Southern India was known as Dakshinapatha. It is interesting to discuss the influence of geography on the history of India. The Himalayas have acted as the "Great Sentinel of the North". They have prevented the cold and dry winds of Tibet from coming to India. They are the source of the rivers which have added fertility to the plains of India. They have provided rains by checking the winds carrying water. They have saved India from the invasions from the North. No invader was able to send his armies across the Northern passes except the Chinese in our own generation. These passes are covered with snow for the most part of the year. The existence of the Himalayas also did not allow any Indian to dream of conquering the northern regions beyond the Himalayas. However, there was a limited movement through these passes during a few weeks of the year when the snow melted. This contact was mostly for trade and cultural purposes. Probably, it was through these passes that a little Mongoloid blood trickled into the Indian veins. This can be noticed amongst the people living on the slopes of the Himalayas. Although India was not influenced by the northern culture to any great extent, the Northern countries were deeply influenced by the Indian culture. This is clear from the example of Tibet where many Indian scholars and saints went to spread their religion and culture.

The north-western ranges of the Himalayas called the Sulaiman and Hindukush mountains are not very high. There exist a number



of passes which have enabled many foreigners to come to India. The Khyber Pass is 3400 feet above the sea level. This pass connects Peshawar with Kabul and most of the foreign invaders came to India through this pass. The Tochi, Kurram and Gomal Passes connect India with Afghanistan. The Bolan Pass is a very wide one and it links India with Kandhar. It is very easy to pass through this pass. It is through these passes that the Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Kushans, Huns, Turks, Tartars, Mughals and even invaders like Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali attacked India. These passes were responsible for changing the fortunes of India. The rulers of India had to take keen interest in providing against the dangers from this quarter and whenever it was not done adequately, the people had to pay very heavily for it.

The north-eastern ranges of the Himalayas did not allow any contact with the eastern world. The passes leading to Chindwin valley through Brahmaputra valley are impossible to cross. The other passes leading from Manipur (Imphal) to Chindwin valley are also difficult to cross although an attempt was made to do so in 1943 by Subhash Chandra Bose. The climate of this region is not good on account of malaria and large scale migration is impossible. Neither any Indian King tried to invade Burma through these passes nor the *vice versa*. During the World War II, many Indians tried to come to India from Burma through these routes but most of them died on the way.

As regards the effect of the Indo-Gangetic plains on the history of India, it cannot be denied that the richness of the soil facilitated the establishment of big empires in this region. Great political, social, religious and philosophical ideas were born in this region. The Vedas were compiled here. Most of the Sanskrit literature was created here. Buddhism and Jainism were started here and flourished here. Taxila, Nalanda, Sarnath and other seats of learning were established in this region. The richness of the soil gave the people enough of leisure to follow other pursuits.

The rivers of this region provide the easiest means of communication and no wonder a large number of big cities came into existence in this part of the country. A reference may be made in this connection to Pataliputra, Banaras, Prayaga, Agra, Delhi, Multan, Lahore, etc. These plains remained the centre of political activities throughout the history of India and whenever an attempt was made to shift the centre to the South, it failed. Reference may be made in this connection to Muhammad Tughluq.

The Indus system of rivers and the Ganga system do not flow in the same direction. The Sutlej and the Yamuna are separated from each other by a comparatively higher tract of land extending from the foot of Siwalik hills to Kurukshetra and beyond right up to Rajputana. It was in this tract of land that a large number of battles were fought for the possession of India, right from the Mahabharat times up to the Battle of Panipat (1761).

It cannot be denied that the richness of the soil made the struggle for existence easier in India than in some other countries. The

result was that people developed habits of ease and pleasure and no wonder the Indians could not stand against the foreigners who were physically stronger. The Muslims who once came to India as conquerors, lost their original virility and were conquered by others.

As regards the Deccan, it remained aloof from the political upheavals of the North and it took a lot of time before any conqueror of the North could conquer the South. Even when Northern India came under the influence of the Aryans, South India continued to be the centre of Dravidian culture. It was Agastya who took the Aryan culture to the South. The same was the case with the Mauryas, the Guptas, the Sultans of Delhi and the Mughals. It cannot be denied that in difficult times the Deccan gave shelter to Indian culture. When Buddhism was dominant in Northern India, the Deccan became the centre of Hinduism and it was thus saved. When it became impossible for the followers of Jainism to live in Northern India, they took refuge in the South. Likewise, when as a result of the conquest of Northern India by the Muslims, Hindu culture was in danger of being obliterated, it found refuge in the Hindu state of Vijayanagar. Moreover, the rulers of the South helped the growth of oceanic trade. Without that, there would not have been the so-called Greater India.

As regards the Ghats, they have a large number of harbours. These harbours helped the growth of foreign trade which brought a lot of money to this country.

The geographical features of India helped in the evolution of the so-called composite culture of the country. It also enabled the growth of the spirit of toleration. The existence of the various types of people in the country created a spirit to tolerate the differences of one another.

The vast size of the country divided into different regions by rivers, mountains, deserts and forests made the problem of political unity of India a difficult one. Experience showed that it was difficult to bring the various parts of the country under one political control. Before the coming of the English to India, this task was accomplished temporarily by kings like Ashoka and Akbar. It was only during the British regime that the whole of India was brought under one sway.

The vastness of India had another effect. It provided enough of field for the satisfaction of ambitions of its rulers. Most of their time was spent in conquering the various parts of India and consequently no time or energy was left to conquer territories beyond the frontiers of India. The result was that a spirit of aloofness came among the Indians and they got so much absorbed with what was happening in India that they ignored the happenings outside the country and consequently India could not keep pace with the developments outside and she had to pay heavily for it both in the form of the loss of her wealth and her independence.

### Unity of India

It is true that there are many factors which stand in the way of unity of India. We have different languages, different scripts and

different races. The vast size of the country also makes the problem of unity of the country a difficult one. It has not always been possible to establish one political power in the country. Except in the time of Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, Akbar and Aurangzeb, the whole of India was not under one political authority. Even in their case, the unity was a temporary one.

In spite of this, there has been a unity in diversity. Throughout, there has been a feeling of oneness of the whole country. The fundamental unity is emphasized by the name Bharatavarsha or the land of Bharata. This word is mentioned in the Epics and the Puranas. In the Vishnu Purana, we come across the following:

**“Uttaram yat Samudrasya**

**Himadreschaive dakshinanam**

**Varsham tad Bharatam nama**

**Bharati yatra santatih.”**

This means that the country that lies north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains is called Bharata. There dwell the descendants of Bharata. A similar sense of unity of the country was always present in the minds of the theologians, political philosophers and poets, who referred to “thousand yojanas (leagues) of land that stretch from the Himalayas to the sea as the proper domain of a single universal emperor.” They also praised the king who could play the role of a *Chakravarti* king. The latter was expected to extend his territory from the snowy mountains in the north to Adam’s Bridge in the south and from the valley of the Brahmaputra in the east to the land beyond the seven mouths of the river Indus in the west. At one time, Prakrit was used throughout this territory. After that, the same function was performed by the Sanskrit language. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata were studied in every nook and corner of the country. The Vedas were respected everywhere, and the same applied to the other Sanskrit literature. The caste system, respect for the cow and worship of common gods, are some of the things common to the inhabitants of all parts of India. Shankaracharya established *Maths* in every nook and corner of India. The places of Hindu pilgrimage are spread all over the country, and a pilgrim feels at home as much in the snows of Amar Nath and Badri Nath as in the “burning sands of Adam’s Bridge”. According to Dr. V. A. Smith, “India beyond all doubt possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or political suzerainty. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language and dress, manners and sect.”

This fundamental unity of India was brought about in many ways. The people who settled in the sub-continent of India gradually evolved a common way of life, and that is referred to by Sir Alfred Risley in these words:

**“Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion, which strikes the observer in**

India, there will still be...a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin."

Another factor that helped this unity was the spread of Hinduism all over the country. The unity of religion helped the spirit of the unity of the country. As mentioned above, the places of pilgrimage, whether in the north or in the south, were visited by the Hindus from all parts of the country, and that also helped the spirit of unity. The Himalayas separated the sub-continent of India from the rest of Asia. The idea of a *Chakravarti* ruler also helped the cause of unity. During the British rule in India, the whole of India was brought under one rule and a uniform system of administration was set up in the country. The English language became the *lingua franca* of India and that also helped the sense of unity in the country. The organisation of railways and posts and telegraphs have also helped the cause of unity. The integration of the Indian states after the independence of India by Sardar Patel has made the whole of the country one.

Dr. Percival Spear says that India was marked by nature as a separate region from the rest of the world. It is so divided that he who controls a part believes that he can take the whole, but stretching out his hand, finds it beyond his strength. Though India has been the seat of a single culture, however diversely expressed, this culture has neither articulated itself in a number of independent national states as in Europe nor as a single stable cultural empire as in China. There has been a constant striving for unity without the power of achieving it (India, Pakistan and the West, p.38).

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Cunningham     | : Ancient Geography of India.                                    |
| Mookerji, R.K. | : Fundamental Unity of India.                                    |
| Panikkar, K.M. | : Geographical Factors in Indian History (1959).                 |
| Raghavan, V.   | : Indological Studies in India.                                  |
| Rapson (Ed.)   | : Cambridge History of India, Vol. 1.                            |
| Sircar, D.C.   | : Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India (1960). |



## CHAPTER II

### SOURCES

There was a time when our knowledge about the history of ancient India was very little and consequently we had to content ourselves with whatever little we had. However, thanks to the researches of Indian and foreign scholars, we now know a lot and the present difficulty is how to compress the same in a manageable form.

The important sources of ancient Indian history are literature, archaeology, foreign accounts and tribal legends. Ancient Indian literature is so varied and plentiful that it is difficult to exhaust even this source. Our knowledge from archaeology is increasing every day. The foreign accounts also throw a flood of welcome light on the subject.

#### Literary Source

Ancient Indian literature is partly sacred and partly secular. As regards the sacred literature, reference may be made to the Rigveda, Samveda, Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda. Out of the four Vedas, the Rigveda is the most ancient and gives a lot of information about the history and political system of the Aryans. The Brahmanas are a prose commentary on the Samhitas or the Vedic hymns. The Aranyakas and the Upanishads embody the philosophical meditations of the learned sages on God, soul and the world. They give us a picture of the religious thought of the Aryans. In addition to the above, there are six Vedangas, viz., phonetics, astronomy, ritual, grammar, etymology and metrics. The Vedangas were intended to help the understanding of the Vedic texts. In course of time, special schools of thought came into existence for a systematic study of the various branches of Vedic knowledge. Those schools evolved special texts of their own known as the Sutras. The Kalpa-sutras are manuals on rituals and there are four divisions of them. The Srautasutras deal with the rules relating to big sacrifices. The Grihyasutras deal with the rules relating to domestic rights. The Dharmasutras deal with Dharma or law. The Sulvasutras deal with the measurement and building of places of sacrifice and fire-altars.

According to Pargiter, the Vedic literature "lacks historical sense and is not always to be trusted." According to Dr. S. N. Pradhan, "The evidences derived from the Vedic literature are very strong and carry authority. Many of them are either directly contemporary records or are traditions derived from contemporary evidences." However, the information derived from this source must be used with due caution and we should neither be credulous nor prejudiced.

Next to the Vedas, the two great Epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, are the most famous books in Sanskrit literature. Whereas the Vedas were for a few, the epics appealed to the people of every class. The epics are a kind of mine whose treasures have been used by dramatists, poets and story-tellers. Even the greatest critics do not deny the fact that the stories told in the epics may be magnified echoes of some historical events. According to Dr. Winternitz, the Ramayana must already "have been generally familiar as an ancient work before Mahabharata has reached its final form". The epics give us an insight into the political and social conditions of the people in their times. The Aryans had developed by that time a large number of small kingdoms along the banks of the Ganges and the Jumna and their tributaries. The forests played an important part. The Aryans were warlike and were constantly forming alliances and waging wars. The power of the king was growing but big empires had not yet come into existence. The Government acted on the advice of the ministers and counsellors and a wicked king who failed in his duties, could be deposed or even put to death. He was the leader of the army in the battlefield and the army ran away if he met with death. Four castes were becoming more and more defined. Town-life was becoming known. Towns were surrounded by moats and battlements. Taxes were paid in silver and copper money and also in kind. The king lived in his palace and was surrounded by nobles and dancing girls. Hunting, drinking, gambling and fighting were the favourite occupations of the kings. Great hospitality was shown to guests. Ideas of chivalry dominated the age. The Kshatriya princesses selected their own husbands at a *Swayamwara*. A wife is referred to as "half the man, his truest friend, a perpetual spring of virtue, pleasure and wealth, a companion in solitude, a father in advice, and a rest in passing through life's wilderness."

It cannot be stated definitely as to when the epics assumed their present shape. The earliest portions must have been very old and additions must have taken place at different times. According to some writers, the latest recension of the epics must have taken place in the second century A.D., but there is also the possibility of an earlier age. The original epics must have been written not later than third or second century B.C.

The *Dharmasastras* like the *Smritis* of Manu, Yajnavalkya, Vishnu, Brihaspati, Narada etc. also give us a lot of information about Hindu society. They lay down the rules according to which the Hindus were required to conduct their lives. Punishments were also provided for the breach of those rules. According to Dr. Buhler, the *Manusmriti* was composed between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. The *Smritis* must have been written after that period.

According to Dr. Winternitz, the *Puranas* are valuable to the historian and to the antiquarian as a source of political history on account of their genealogies, even though they can only be used with great caution and careful discrimination. They are of inestimable value from the point of view of the history of religion, and on this

head alone deserve far more careful study than has hitherto been devoted to them. They afford us far greater insight into all aspects and phases of Hinduism—its mythology, its idol-worship, its theism and pantheism, its love of God, its philosophy and superstitions, its festivals and ceremonies and its ethics than any other work. As a literary production, they are by no means a pleasing phenomenon. The careless language and poor versification, in which grammar often suffers for the sake of the metre, are just as characteristic of these works as are the confused medley of contents and the boundless exaggerations.

It used to be the general opinion of Western scholars that the Puranas belonged to the latest production of Sanskrit literature and came into existence during the last thousand years. However, this view is not accepted today. The poet Bana knew the Puranas very well and he tells us that he attended a reading of the Vayu Purana in his native village. Kumarila Bhatt relies on the Puranas as a source of law. Shankara and Ramanuja referred to the Puranas as ancient and sacred texts. Alberuni was familiar with the Puranas and he gives us a list of the eighteen Puranas. He has also given quotations from certain Puranas. According to Dr. Winternitz, the earlier Puranas came into being to all intents and purposes as early as in the first century of the Christian era. There is a resemblance between the Buddhist Mahayana texts of the first century of the Christian era and the Puranas. There is a lot in common between the Puranas and the Lalitavistara. The Puranas are 18 in number, but all of them are not equally important for historical purposes. As sources of history, we depend largely on the Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Matsya Purana, Brahma Purana and Bhavishya Purana. Every Purana deals with five topics, viz., Sarga, Prati-sarga, Vamsha, Manvantra and Vamshacharita. It is the fifth topic which is useful for students of history. The Puranas start with the rulers who trace their origin from the Sun and the Moon. They describe the various kings who ruled in the Madhya-desh. They fill in the gap from the end of the epic age to the rise of Buddha. They give the names of the Puru Kings of Hastinapur and the Ikshvaku Kings of Kosala. They give us details about the Sisunaga Kings and Nanda Kings. Dr. V. A. Smith has shown that the Vishnu Purana is very reliable as regards the Mauryan dynasty and the Matsya Purana as regards the Andhra and Sisunaga dynasties. The Vayu Purana describes the rule of the Guptas as it was under Chandragupta I. At the end of the list of kings, certain Puranas give a series of dynasties of low and barbarian origin such as Abhiras, Gardabhas, Sakas, Yavanas, Tusaras, Hunas etc.

The Puranas can be used for the purpose of building up the history of ancient Indian geography. In them, we come across the names of very many cities which existed in their times. The distances between the various cities mentioned in the Puranas can also be determined approximately from the information contained in the Puranas. It is sometimes stated that a particular person started from a particular place in the morning and reached another place in the evening. From such a description, it must not be difficult to



ascertain the approximate distance between the two places. The Puranas help us to know in many cases the old names of the cities, rivers and mountains. Mr. Dey of Calcutta has done a lot of work in this connection. More patient research can yield further results. It cannot be denied that the knowledge of ancient Indian geography can help us to appreciate better the history of ancient India.

According to N. Mukhopadhyaya, "The Puranas form an important portion of the religious literature of the Hindus, and, together with the Dharmasastras and Tantras, govern their conduct and regulate their religious observances at the present day. The Vedas are studied by the antiquarian, the Upanishadas by the philosopher; but every orthodox Hindu must have some knowledge of the Puranas, directly or vicariously, to shape his conduct and to perform the duties essential to the worldly and spiritual welfare."

According to Pradhan, "The Puranas profess to give us the ancient history of India. In so doing they begin from the earliest Rigvedic period describing genealogies of kings who established kingdoms and principalities and thus parcelled out and ruled ancient India. Occasionally, the feats and achievements of Kings and Risis are related, battles mentioned and described, noticeable incidents and happenings recorded and very valuable synchronisms noted down."

There has been a tendency among the modern scholars to belittle the value of the information found in the Puranas. It has been suggested that the genealogies of the Puranas were invented by some fertile brains at the instance of the reigning kings. However, there is nothing to support such a view. The Puranikas profess to tell the truth and they had nothing to gain from kings and their descendants who were already dead and gone. They had nothing to gain from the public in general. It would have been very difficult to compile the dynastic lists from pure imagination. The Sutas were interested in the work of preserving the texts of the Puranas and thus the Puranic literature must have been faithfully preserved and transmitted. It seems that ancient royal genealogies were carefully studied, analysed and preserved by their custodians. While studying the Puranas, we should neither be prejudiced nor credulous about the truth of the facts mentioned in them. We should always follow the middle path and accept only that which seems to be reasonable. According to Smith, "The historian of the remote past of any nation must be content to rely upon tradition as embodied in literature and to acknowledge that the results of his researches, when based upon traditionary materials, are inferior to those obtainable for periods of which the facts are attested by contemporary evidence."

A lot of research has been done on the Puranas. In addition to a large number of articles written on the subject, the works of Pargiter are important and those are Ancient Indian Historical Tradition and the Dynasties of the Kali Age.

It cannot be denied that there are certain serious shortcomings in the Puranas. History is mixed up with fables and folk-lore. The

legends in the Puranas are religious and not historical. Some of the things given in the Puranas are based on hearsay and are not corroborated from other reliable sources. At some places, the various Puranas give conflicting accounts.

The *Buddhist Literature* gives a lot of information regarding the period which immediately preceded the accession of Bimbisara. It throws light on many topics which are not dealt with by the Brahmanical writers. The Buddhist literature is found in two languages, viz., Pali and Sanskrit. The Pali canon is divided into three Pitakas or Baskets, viz., the Vinaya Pitaka, the Sutta Pitaka and the Abhidhamma Pitaka. The Vinaya Pitaka contains disciplinary rules and regulations for leading a monastic life. It contains the following texts: Sutta Vibhaga, Khandakas and Parivara. The Sutta Pitaka is a summary of the teachings of Buddha. It is the most important of the Pitakas. It includes the Digha Nikaya, Majjhima Nikaya, Samyutta Nikaya, Anguttara Nikaya, and Khudduka Nikaya. The Abhidhamma Pitaka consists of seven texts and deals with the doctrines of the Buddha in a scholastic manner.

The Dhammapada is a collection of 423 sayings of Buddha. The Theragatha is a collection of poems composed by monks. The Therigatha is a collection of poems composed by nuns. These poems are of a very high standard. The Buddhavamsa is a collection of legends depicting the 24 lives of Buddha.

There is also a mass of non-canonical literature in Pali and the most important is Milinda Panha or "Questions of King Milinda." It is named after the Greek King, Menander. It resembles the dialogues of Plato and is written in a very elegant prose. It discusses a number of problems and disputed points of Buddhism. It is a masterpiece of Pali literature. The greatest commentator in Pali of Buddhism was Buddhaghosha. The Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa are the chronicles of Ceylon. The Lalitavistara and Vaipulya Sutras are important works in Sanskrit dealing with Buddhism. The Lalitavistara contains an embellished story of the life of Buddha. The Vaipulya Sutras deal with Buddhist doctrines in nine books.

The Nettiprakarana deals with the teachings of Buddha. The Petakopadesa explains the four noble truths of Buddhism. Both of these works are considered to be the writings of Maha Kachchana. Buddhaghosha lived in Ceylon in the 5th century A. D. He wrote commentaries on practically all the Pali texts of the Tripitkas. He is famous for his Visuddhimagga. The other famous commentators were Buddhadatta, Ananda, Dhammapala, Upasena, Kassapa, Dhammasiri and Mahasami.

Nagarjuna was a great teacher of Buddhism and he was the author of Satasahasrika, Prajnaparamita and Madhyamika Sutras. Aryadeva was also a great writer. Asanga was the author of Mahayana Sutralamkara. Vasubandhu was the author of Abhidhamma Kosha. Dignaga, Chandragomin and Shantideva were great scholars. Asvaghosha was the author of Budhacharita, Sutralamkara, Saundarananda Kavya and Mahayana Sraddhotpada.

The Jatakas deal with the previous births of Buddha. According to the Buddhists, Gautama Buddha had to pass through a large number of births before he was born as a Sakya prince and got enlightenment. About 549 Jataka stories have been collected and published. The Jatakas are of unique importance as they represent the entire life and thought of their age. They give us supplementary information of great importance which helps us to check up the information got from the Brahmanical works. From the Jatakas, we can draw a picture of the political, social, economic and religious condition of the people. The Jatakas have been assigned to the second or third century B. C. There are reliefs of the Jatakas on the stone walls around the Stupas of Sanchi and Barhut which were built about that time. The Buddhist tradition dates them much earlier and it is stated that they deal with the period before the birth of Buddha. According to Dr. Winternitz, "The Jatakas were of inestimable value, not only as regards literature and art, but also from the point of view of the history of civilization for the period before the third century B.C."

*Jain Literature* also contains a lot of historical information. Prof. Jacobi and Dr. Banarsi Das have done a lot of work on Jain literature. The Jains are spending a lot of money on the publication of their literature and it is hoped that a lot of useful information will be forthcoming when the work is completed.

The *Mudrarakshas* of Vishaka Datta gives the story of Chandragupta Maurya and Chanakya. It explains how the Nandas were overthrown and Chandragupta became the king of Magadha.

The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya contains a lot of information. It not only gives us detailed information with regard to the system of administration, but also gives us an idea of the social and religious life of the people.

*Patanjali's Mahabhasya* and *Panini's Ashtadhyayi* are works on Sanskrit grammar, but there are also some occasional references to kings, republics and other political events.

Several literary and other secular works supplement our knowledge of ancient India. Harisena was a great poet of Samudragupta and his poetical works especially the Prasasti on the Allahabad Pillar inscription, throw a flood of light on the achievements of Samudragupta. The dramas of Kalidas such as *Shakuntala*, *Meghduta* etc. give useful information about the social life of the people. The information contained in poetry, drama and prose regarding the social, religious, economic and cultural life of the people has not been exploited to the full. The difficulty with regard to them lies in the fact that the dates of their composition are not fixed and consequently it is sometimes dangerous to use the information contained in them.

The two dramas of *Bhasa* known as *Svapnavasavadatta* and *Pratijna Yaugandharayana* supply us interesting information about the political condition of India in the time of King Pradyota of Ujjain. The three dramatic works ascribed to Harsha throw interest-



ing light on the history of seventh century A.D. and those are the Nagananda, the Ratnavali and the Priyadarsika.

Certain writers took the lives of their royal patrons as the theme of their literary works. Bana wrote *Harshacharita* or *Life of Harsha* in prose and this book is useful not only from the point of view of political history but also for depicting the economic, social and religious life of the people of seventh century A. D. Vakpati and Bihana described the achievements of Yasovarman and Vikramaditya in the *Gaudavaho* and *Vikramankdeva Charit*. Another poetical work named *Rameharit* tells the story of king Rāmpal of Bengal. The other biographical works are the *Kumarapaia-Charit* of Jaysimha, *Kumarapala Charit* of Hemchandra, *Hammira Kavva* of Nava Chandra, *Naysahasanka-Charit* of Padangupta, *Bhojprabanda* of Ballala, *Prithviraja-Charit* of Chandbardai and *Prithviraj-Vijay* of an unknown writer.

The above works cannot be regarded as genuine history, although they contain valuable historical information. Their object was the glorification of the king rather than to give a true picture of his life and times, and they were mostly considered by their authors not as historical texts, but primarily as media for showing their literary skill and ingenuity.

The *Rajtarangini* of Kalhana was written in 1149-50 A.D. According to Dr. R.C. Majumdar, this is the only work in ancient Indian literature that can be regarded as an historical text in the true sense of the word. The author has not only taken great pains to collect his material from the existing chronicles and other sources, but has laid down certain general principles for the writing of history at the beginning of the book. According to him, he had examined 11 works of former scholars which contained the chronicles of their times. He had also inspected the ordinances of former kings relating to religious foundations and grants, inscriptions etc.

Kalhan's account of the history of Kashmir is not trust-worthy before the seventh century A.D. Of all the Indian writers, he is the only person who gives an account of Kanishka. From seventh century onwards, the *Rajtarangini* gives a reliable history of Kashmir. The author gives the career of each king in chronological order with a fair amount of details. As he gradually comes nearer to his own time, history becomes more detailed and he gives a full picture of those times. It is to be noted that his account was continued by Jonaraja and others.

Reference may be made to the chronicles of Gujarat. The well-known works are the *Ras Mala* and *Kirtu Kaumudi* of Someshwar, *Sukrita Samkirtana* of Arisimha, *Prabandha Chintamani* of Merutunga, *Prabandha-Kosa* of Rajashekhara, *Hammiramad-Mardana* of Jaisimha etc. These are treasure houses of stories and fables as well as historical anecdotes.

There are local chronicles of Nepal also. However, the facts do not seem to have been carefully compiled.

## Archaeology

Archaeology has contributed a lot to the history of ancient India and its importance cannot be over-emphasized. Indian archaeology is a science of recent growth but it has made wonderful progress during that brief period. The pioneer work was done by Europeans but the same is being carried on now by the Indians.

(a) *Inscriptions.* Under the heading of archaeology, we may discuss the information derived from inscriptions, numismatics and monuments. As regards inscriptions, they are of very great value. As they are engraved on stones and metals, they cannot be tampered with without detection. Consequently, we can be sure while using the material from inscriptions that they contain what was originally written. While in the case of books, there is the possibility of interpolations by known and unknown authors, that is not the case with inscriptions. Their genuineness cannot be doubted. The inscriptions also give us a correct idea of the method of writing followed at a time when they were actually inscribed. The character of their script also enables us to fix their approximate age. Their location can also throw some valuable light. The difficulty of deciphering inscriptions has been overcome in most of the cases although the script of the Indus Valley still remains a mystery.

If we analyse the contents of inscriptions, they can be grouped under the following heads : commercial, magical, religious and didactic, administrative, eulogistic, votive or dedicative, commemorative and literary. As regards commercial inscriptions, their specimens are to be found on the seals of the Indus Valley. Some of these seals must have been used for the stamping of bales of merchandise, commodities like potteries etc.

Some specimens of magical inscriptions are found in the Indus seals which were used as amulets and contained magical formulae on them.

Religious and didactic inscriptions deal with religious and moral matters. Possibly, some of the seals and tablets of the Indus Valley were objects of worship and were not used as amulets. The inscriptions of Asoka are the best specimen of the religious and didactic inscriptions. The edicts of Asoka are appropriately called Dhamma-Lipi.

Asoka's edicts are also a specimen of administrative inscriptions. An extract from one of his inscriptions reads thus : "Everywhere in my dominions, the Yuktas, the Rajjukas and the Pradesikas shall proceed on circuit every five years as well for this purpose (for the instruction of Dhamma) as for other business...." The Sogaura copper plate inscription of the third century B. C. is an example of pure administrative inscription. The Junagadh Rock Inscription of Rudradaman I also contains administrative material. A large number of copper plate inscriptions have been found both in the north and south and they contain many useful administrative details. Reference may be made in this connection to the Banskhera copper plate inscription of Harsha.

As regards the eulogistic inscriptions (Prasastis), they are very important from the political point of view. Generally, they contain the name and genealogy of the ruler concerned, the earlier career of the King, his military, political and administrative achievements, the existence of contemporary states coming into conflict with him and the inter-state relations, the administrative system, the political ideals, the personal accomplishments of the King, his patronage, munificence and charity and mythological or Puranic allusions by way of comparison and similes. The one great difficulty in these inscriptions is that there is a tendency on the part of the authors to exaggerate the achievements of the kings.

We have a large number of votive or dedicative inscriptions. It is possible that some of the tablets found in the Indus Valley contained votive inscriptions. The Piprahwa Vase Inscription records the dedication of the relic casket of Lord Buddha. The Besnagar Garuda Pillar Inscription of Heliodoros also belongs to this category. Many of the dedicative inscriptions deal with installation of images and the construction of temples. Reference may be made in this connection to the Mandasor Inscription of the time of Kumargupta II and Bandhuvvarman and the Bhitari Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta and the Aihole Inscription of the time of Pulakesin II.

The number of donative inscriptions is very large as many occasions were offered for this purpose to the rulers and the subjects. Some of the inscriptions refer to the donations of caves or other buildings for the residence of monks and ascetics. Some inscriptions refer to the donation of money in the form of a permanent endowment. Out of these funds, the Brahmans and the needy were fed, lamps were lighted in the temples etc. In some inscriptions, there is a reference to the donation of lands and villages to the monasteries, educational institutions and the Brahmanas.

Commemorative inscriptions record such events as birth, death or other important events. The Rummindei Inscription of Asoka reads thus: "King Priyadarsin, beloved of the gods, when he had been consecrated many years, came in person and did worship. Because here the Sakya sage, Buddha, was born, he caused a huge stone wall to be made and a stone pillar to be erected." A large number of commemorative inscriptions refer to the Silaharas of Kohlapur, the Chalukyas of Kalyani, the Rashtrakutas, the Yadavas, etc.

Some inscriptions contain poetic compositions and dramatic works and their purpose is primarily literary. From the Mahanirvana Stupa at Kusinagara in Uttar Pradesh was discovered a copper plate containing 13 lines and recording the Udana-Sutta of Buddha.

Inscriptions have been found on stone and copper plates and other materials. Asoka tells us that he got his edicts engraved on stone so that they may last for a long time. Writings on stone were on rocks, pillars, slabs, pedestal or the back of images, rims and lids of vases, caskets etc., prisms of crystal, the walls of temples, the pavement of pillars of colonnades, caves etc.



Copper was the material which was commonly used for the writing of inscriptions. An inscription copper-plated was called *Tamrapata*, *Tamrapattra*, *Tamrasasana*, *Sasanapattra* or *Danapattra* according to its contents. It is remarkable to note that land-grants were invariably inscribed on copper plates and were handed over to the donee so that they may serve as title-deeds. Fahien tells us that he found in many Buddhist monasteries copper plates which referred to the grants of land. Some of them were as old as the time of Buddha. The discovery of the *Sohgaura* copper plates of the Mauryan period confirms this statement of Fahien. Hieun Tsang tells us that Kanishka summoned a Buddhist Council which prepared three commentaries and those commentaries were engraved on copper plates and kept in stone caskets which were placed in the Stupas built over them. It is also stated that the commentaries of Sayana on the Vedas were engraved on copper. Some specimens of books inscribed on copper plates are to be found in the British Museum. The use of copper for writing purposes was not very common up to the sixth century A.D., but it was quite popular for the next six centuries. Copper plates were of different sizes and thickness. Some of them were so thin that they could be bent easily and there were others which were very thick and heavy. The size of a copper plate depended upon the contents of the document and the size of the commonly used writing material in the district where the copper plate was issued. Sometimes a document was inscribed not on one copper plate but on very many and in that case the copper plates were fastened together by means of copper rings. In this way, the copper plates looked like a book which could be opened easily. Sufficient margin was left on the copper plates.

(b) *Numismatics*. A study of the Indian coins enlightens us a great deal regarding the history of ancient India. The Numismatic Society of India is doing a lot of useful work in this connection. We have at present a large number of coins found from various parts of India and dealing with the different aspects of ancient Indian history. Coins are of various metals : gold, silver and copper.

Coins help us to build up the history of the country in many ways. They give us the names of the kings who ruled at various times in different parts of the country. In many cases, the coins are the only information we have regarding the existence of certain kings. Without these coins, the existence of those kings would have remained unknown. Many a time, the information from the coins can be used to corroborate the evidence from other sources such as the *Puranas* etc. The coins also help us to fix up the chronology. Coins mention the year in which they were issued. The existence of a large number of coins issued during the different years of the reign of a king helps us to fix the exact dates for the accession and the death of the king. Coins have helped us to fix the dates of *Samudragupta*. The location of coins helps us to determine the extent of the territory of a king. The discovery of a large number of Roman coins in India confirms the fact that there was a brisk trade between India and the Roman Empire. That also refers to the economic prosperity of India and the sea-going activities of its people. The figures of the various kings appear with coins and from them we can have an idea regarding the

head-dress of those kings. Sometimes, the hobbies or the amusements of the rulers can be known from a study of their coins. Coins give an indication of the prosperity or otherwise of the country. If people have gold or silver coins, they are likely to be prosperous. The case is otherwise if they have copper coins alone or more of them than those of gold or silver. Sometimes, the depreciation of coinage gives an indication that the country was passing through abnormal times. During the Huna invasion of India, the Gupta currency depreciated. The symbols on the Gupta coinage refer to their zeal for Hinduism. The coins give us genuine information regarding the history of ancient India and there is no possibility of their being tempered with. Coins are issued by the rulers and other authorities like Srenis etc. and there is no possibility of their being issued merely to deceive people.

The earliest coins of India have only figures, devices or symbols and no legends. Sometimes, the coins were cast in dies but very often symbols were punched on pieces of metals. The symbols varied from time to time and were punched with a view to guarantee their genuineness and value. On account of the absence of legends on them, much information is not available.

After the Greek invasion of India, the practice of writing the names of the kings on the coins was started. A large number of coins were issued by the Indo-Bactrian rulers who had under their control the Punjab and the North-Western Frontier. These coins possess a high degree of artistic excellence and ultimately had a tremendous influence on Indian coinage. The thing borrowed in the Indian coinage was the name and the portrait of the ruler. The Greek coins refer to about 30 Greek kings and queens who ruled in India. The classical writers refer to only four or five of them and in the absence of these coins, the names of other rulers would have remained absolutely unknown. The coins of the Scythians and Parthians were of inferior quality but they also give us a lot of historical information. Their coins have enabled us to have an outline of the history of the rulers and without them, even the outline would have been missing. A branch of the Scythians settled in Gujarat and Kathiawar and they issued coins in which the names of the ruling kings and their fathers were mentioned in the Saka era. These coins have helped us to reconstruct the history of Western Satraps for more than three centuries. The Kushans also issued a number of coins. The existence of the Malavas, Yaudheyas and the Mirta rulers of Panchala is known only from the coins. The coins of the Satavahanas supplement, correct and corroborate the accounts of the Puranas. The Gupta coins also give us a lot of useful information. The coins of Samudragupta are particularly remarkable and a detailed description of them will be given in their proper place. The Indian coins after the Gupta period do not give us much historical information.

(c) *Monuments.* The ancient monuments like buildings, statues of stones or metals, terracotta, ornamental and decorative fragments, pottery etc. give us a lot of useful and reliable information. The excavation of the sites of the old towns like Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Taxila have given us a lot of information hitherto





The Greek sources give us a lot of valuable information about the knowledge of India in the Hellenistic period. They are the first to mention the country and their knowledge is particularly valuable in the sphere of the Hellenistic period. The Greek sources give us a lot of valuable information about the knowledge of India in the Hellenistic period. They are the first to mention the country and their knowledge is particularly valuable in the sphere of the Hellenistic period.

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Abernethy wrote India in the time of Megasthenes at Court and he has left to us a remarkable work called Indica. This work has been translated into English and Hindi and contains a lot of useful information about India. Abernethy was a student of the Sanskrit language and he was able to derive his information from Sanskrit sources. His book is a valuable and contains detailed information on many points. However, he wrote from what he read and not from what he saw. His information is not based on his personal knowledge but on what he read in books in Sanskrit. He says practically nothing about the position of the people of India in his own times.

### Tribal Legends

Some information about ancient India can be derived from tribal legends as well. However, in estimating the value of tribal

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legends for purposes of history it is desirable to inquire whether the legends are uniform or multiform, whether any trace of modification is discernible since they were first reported, and whether they are generally accepted as true by the tribe. It is also necessary to scrutinise carefully the qualifications of those who reported them, to inquire how far they were competent to understand with precision the language of their informants, avoid the danger of voluntary suggestion and to receive the impression like a photographic plate without preconception or bias. If the records of the traditions of a tribe can stand these tests, they obviously possess great value. If they fail, their value is diminished or entirely disappears. Tribal legends are of great value in constructing the history of Karkakhand (Chhota Nagpur), although no separate literature on the tribal legends exists.

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## CHAPTER III

### THE PRE-HISTORIC PEOPLE

Much work has not been done on the pre-historic period of Indian History. The discovery of Palaeoliths at Palayavaram in south India by Foot in 1863 was a great landmark. But the work was not pursued with the zeal required for the purpose. The lack of funds also hampered progress. However, we are not in a position to say something about this period.

#### Palaeolithic Man

The earliest settlers in India have been divided into two classes, viz., Palaeolithic and Neolithic. The term palaeolithic is derived from two Greek words meaning Old Stone. The term Neolithic is derived from two Greek words meaning New Stone. The name Palaeolithic is applied to the earliest people as the only evidence of their existence is given by a number of rude stone implements. Scholars like Paterson, Krishnaswamy Aiyappan, Dr. Sankalia, Seshadri, Dr. B. Subbarao, Dharni Sen, De Terra and Zeuner have made valuable contributions to the knowledge of many Palaeolithic remains in India because caves and river-beds have not been systematically investigated and climate has also not preserved the remains in India. Most of the Palaeolithic remains in India are made of a peculiar kind of rock called "Quartzite." From this fact, the Palaeolithic men in India are also known as "Quartzite men". The Palaeolithic men avoided forest on account of the difficulty of clearing them with their primitive weapons. Palaeoliths have been found in South India in Madurai, Tanjore, Kadur, Nyamti, Taliya and Bellary district. The district of Cuddapah was also a centre of Palaeolithic culture in South India as it is the home of true Quartzites. Later Palaeolithic remains have been found in the neighbourhood of Madras. The districts of Guntur, Godavari and Krishna have also given Palaeolithic finds. In the Kurnul district, the finds are from caves, containing traces of human habitation and extinct animals. Pottery has also been found in these caves.

Palaeolithic remains have also been found in Hyderabad, Dharwar, Bijapur, Belgaum, Gujarat, Rewa and Bundhelkhand. Old stone implements have also been found in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. There must have been some connection between the Palaeolithic peoples of different parts of India as the finds are similar in different parts.

The Palaeolithic man in India was a savage who lived in the "drifts of rivers or lakes and caves." He ate roots, fruits, nuts and the flesh of wild beasts.



We come across various kinds of implements of this period, e.g., axes, arrow heads, spears, digging tools, circular hurling stones, choppers, knives, scrapers, hammer stones etc. These implements, when they were sharp-edged, were held in cleft bamboos, secured by strips of hide or vegetable fibre. Some of these implements had thick butt ends, which were used for digging edible roots or for hand to hand fights. Implements of hard wood were also used. Those were clubs or sharp-edged spheres. However, no remains of them have been found because white ants have finished them.

The Palaeolithic man in India knew the use of fire. Traces of fire having been used are found in Kurnul caves.

The Palaeolithic man had to protect himself from tigers, lions, panthers, wolves, wild dogs, hyaenas, elephants, wild buffaloes, etc. No wonder, the Palaeolithic man was mighty hunter and he also **did not lack muscular strength.**

The presence of cinders in the Kurnul cave and the absence of human or animal skulls go to prove that the dwellers were hunters of human scalp and performed some magical religious rites and human sacrifices formed an important part. No Palaeolithic graves have been found in India and the dead were left probably to natural decomposition or to be devoured by beasts. Paintings were discovered in 1910 in some caverns at Singanpur near Raigarh in Madhya Pradesh. These figures are believed to have been drawn with bamboo brushes. They are made of red pigment and represented hunting scenes, groups of figures, hieroglyphics and drawings of animals. Human figures are in dancing postures. The chief feature of Raigarh paintings is their spirited expression and spontaneity of treatment. Palaeolithic paintings have also been found in Kaimur ranges and also in the Mirzapur district.

It has been suggested that the Palaeolithic man belonged to the Negrito race like the modern people of the Andaman Islands. They had short stature, dark skin, woolly hairs and flat noses.

### Neolithic Man

Neolithic sites in India have been found near the sea, lakes and mining and fishing areas such as Maski and Tinnevely. The important factor which decided the settlement of Neolithic men in India was the availability of the black coloured rock, which is more tough and tenacious than quartzite. The Neolithic men occupied practically the whole of India except the portion below the Kaveri. There were no Neolithic settlements in the extreme south. The Neolithic remains found from the Tinnevely district are considered to be importations from the north. Salem district is very rich in Neolithic finds. The workmanship of the tools found in the Salem district is of a superior quality than that of those found in the north. We have found rich collections of pottery from Malabar. We have found toys, mace heads, tiles, drilled stones, net sinkers and pottery from Mysore. Tools of various kinds have been found from the Bellary district. Shell bangles of delicate workmanship have been found from Anantpur and Cuddapah districts. Different kinds of finds

have been found from South and Central Bombay. We have some information about the Neolithic men of Gujarat and Kathiawar. The same applies to Sind and Baluchistan. Central India has not been sufficiently explored. No Neolithic finds have been found from Bengal.

According to Bruce Foot, the Indian Neolithic implements can be classified into 78 distinct types. 41 types belong to the polished class and 37 to the unpolished class. To the polished class belonged such implements as chisels, hammers, mortars, beads, buttons, axes, toys etc. To the unpolished class belong arrows, knives, lancets, wedges and mallets. It appears that Neolithic men had a fine sense of colours, and no wonder they chose stones of different colours for their tools.

We have come across a lot of pottery of the Neolithic Age. Some of them are bowls, flower pots, Lotahs, Chattries, etc. There is a variety of colour in Neolithic pottery. It appears that different kinds of clay were chosen, they were fired to different degrees and special pigments were applied to them. The colours common were red, yellow, brown or purple-grey. We have not come across any human or animal figures relating to the pottery of the Neolithic Age. The figures common are leaves and flowers. According to Bruce Foot, there was a gradual and continuous evolution in the potter's art before the great Aryan invasion under which the potter's craft came to be despised and neglected, as it is nowadays to a great extent as evidenced by the great plainness and often absolute ugliness of the present-day pottery.

No rich specimens of sculptural art have been found from Neolithic India, except the one in the Bellary district. All that has been found are rough sketches of birds, beasts and human beings.

The Neolithic people had their settlements in granite rocks. They gave them natural protection from rain and the sun, and could be conveniently adapted for dwelling purposes. No houses have been discovered even in such busy places as Bellary and Salem districts. That was probably due to the fact that twigs and thatch materials were used for the construction of the houses and that has perished during the course of time. Pile dwellings have not been found in India although there must have been some such settlements on the coast. Cinder mounds have been found at several places in the Bellary district and also in Hyderabad.

The food of the people consisted of fruits, vegetables, roots, nuts, wild pulses, cereals, flesh of animals, fish and milk products. They knew the art of making curd, butter and ghee from milk.

To begin with, barks and skins of animals were used by the people for covering their bodies. However, later on, clothes of cotton and wool were used for the same purpose. The art of dyeing was also known to the people. Men tied a piece of cloth round their loins and threw a piece over their shoulders. Women used a petticoat up to their knees. They also combed their hair to

form various shapes. They also put on beads, rings, bangles and armlets.

The occupations of the people were hunting and fishing. Fishing must have been done on a large scale. The people also started domesticating animals. Towards the end of the Neolithic period, agriculture also became one of the main occupations of the people. To begin with they depended on wild grains, but later on they began to produce crops. Fruits and vegetables were also grown. The crafts of the carpenter, stone mason, potter, weaver, dyer, etc. were also known.

The Neolithic people worshipped ancestral spirits. They performed a large number of rites on the occasion of death. They believed that the dead must be provided with all the amenities of life. They used urns for burying the bones and ashes of the dead. The urns were oval in shape. Some were one-legged and some were without legs. Urns have been found at Maski, Salem, Hyderabad and Mysore. Stone worship was common. The people also worshipped Phallus. There were also human sacrifices and animal sacrifices.

H. D. Sankalia says : "Much has been said about Neolithic culture. According to some scholars, the people of this age understood the use of fire, made pottery, cultivated grain and domesticated animals. But, as these theories are based on surface finds alone, no definite conclusions are possible until positive evidence is furnished by further excavation."

As regards the survivals of the Neolithic Age, some of the Neolithic people were driven into hills and forests by later invaders and they are at present represented by the Gonds, Bhils, Santals etc. We have also inherited a number of superstitions from the Neolithic people. The worship of manes and spirits and Phallus images of stone and wood can be traced to the Neolithic period. The same can be said about the use of amulets, beads, sacred threads, shells, stones etc. for curing diseases and keeping away the evil spirits. The potter's wheel and the art of spinning and weaving are also traced from the Neolithic period. The same applies to omens.

### **The Age of Metals**

The Neolithic Age was followed by the age of Metals. The transition from stone to metal was a slow and gradual process. This is proved by the fact that the use of stone and metallic implements is found side by side. There is also a close resemblance in the shape of early metal and Neolithic implements. However, there is no uniformity regarding the use of metals in different parts of India. In the case of northern India, copper replaced stone as the ordinary material for tools and weapons. Axes, swords, spear-heads and various other objects made of copper have been found in different parts of the country. It was after the lapse of many centuries that iron came to be known and was gradually used as a substitute for copper. The result is that we can make a distinction between the Copper Age and the early Iron Age in northern India. However,



that was not so in southern India. There the Iron Age immediately succeeded the Stone Age.

Bronze is an alloy made up of nine parts of copper and one part of tin. It is very suitable for the manufacture of tools and weapons. It is true that bronze implements of early date have been found in India along with those of copper, but it does not follow that bronze was generally used in India to the exclusion of copper. Under the circumstances, we cannot say that there was any Bronze Age in India.

It is not possible to fix the dates of the different ages in the history of India. However, it may be stated that the Palaeolithic Age lasted from about 35,000 to 10,000 B.C. and the Neolithic Age from about 10,000 B.C. to 5,000 B.C. The Copper Age probably started about 4,000 years ago. The view of Dr. V.A. Smith is that the earliest of the copper tools may be as old as 2,000 B.C. The discovery or introduction of iron in South India may have occurred much later and quite independently.

#### *Suggested Readings*

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
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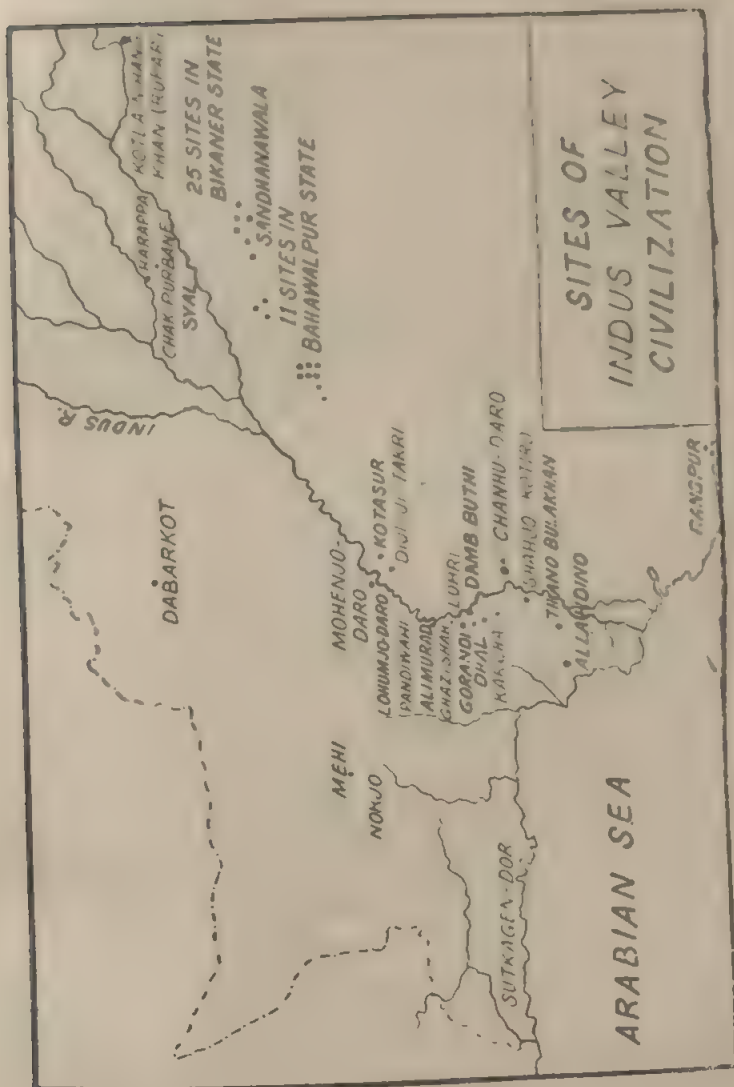
## CHAPTER IV

### THE INDUS CIVILIZATION OR HARAPPA CULTURE

The world of scholarship was aroused by the declaration of Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archaeology, that a new civilization had been discovered in the Indus Valley. As a matter of fact, Sir John wrote three stout volumes on the Indus Civilization. Excavation work was done at Mohenjodaro by Sir John Marshall and his colleagues from 1921 to 1927. It was later on continued by J.H. Mackay from 1927 to 1931. Work was also done on this site by G.F. Dales in 1963. Mohenjodaro (Mound of the dead) is the local name of a high mound situated in the District of Larkana in Sindh. It is about 300 miles North of Karachi in West Pakistan. The surrounding region is fertile and even now it is called Nakhliстан or the "Garden of Sindh". It is believed that there was a city about 5,000 years ago and that city was destroyed and rebuilt no less than seven times. Although only seven distinct town-levels have already been unearthed, Dr. Mortimer Wheeler believes that evidence of even other civilisations might be lying beneath them. The city, as it stands today, is on two mounds. One is 1,300 yards long and 600 yards wide and the other is 400 yards long and 300 yards wide. It is possible that the city remained in ruins for a considerable period before a new city was built on the old remains. Many centuries must have passed before the site was finally abandoned.

Almost at the same time when excavations were going on at Mohenjodaro, similar work was being done at Harappa which is situated on the banks of the river Ravi in the Montgomery District in West Punjab and is at a distance of about 100 miles from Lahore. References to the finds from Harappa had been made by General Cunningham and stone from this site was used by the contractors of the railway line passing through that region. This city was believed to have been bigger than the one at Mohenjodaro but it was not properly preserved and partly destroyed by the contractors and the people of the neighbourhood before its importance was realised. Work on this site was done by M.S. Wats from 1921 to 1934. Further excavation work on this site was done by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, then Director-General of Archaeology in India.

About 80 miles south of Mohenjodaro and about half a mile south of village of Jamal-Kirio, three adjacent mounds or tells constitute an ancient site known as Chanhudaro. This site was discovered in 1931 and certain objects similar to those of Harappa were found. In 1935-36, further work was carried out. Three building levels were found in association with the Harappa culture and above them, two successive cultures similar to those of Jhukar and Khaugar sites of Sindh were found.





Excavation work was done by the Department of Archaeology of the Government of India at Rupar in the Ambala District. Things found here were similar to those found at Harappa. Excavations were also done at Rangpur and Lothal in Saurashtra. At Rangpur were found antiquities such as copper axe, beads of steatite and cornelian and a large number of earthen-ware. There is a similarity in the construction of drains at Rangpur and Harappa. It is pointed out that the Rangpur excavations fill up the gap between the Harappa culture and the Buddhist period. Unlike Mohenjodaro where civilization met with a sudden end, at the Rangpur site the Harappa culture died a natural death and was succeeded by a post-Harappa culture.

From Lothal have been found 107 seals and sealings with Indus script from a kiln. Other antiquities from this site include beads of gold, steatite, cornelian and faience, a vessel, fish hooks, arrow-heads of copper, terra-cotta animal figurines and toys, chert blades, ivory objects and pottery used for domestic and funerary purposes. Excavation work was done at Kalibangan in Rajasthan by B. B. Lal and B. K. Thapar between 1961 and 1969.

When excavation work was done at Mohenjodaro and Harappa and similar things were found at both the sites, Sir John Marshall and other scholars gave it the name of Indus Civilization as the sites were within the area covered by the Indus river and its tributaries. However, when objects similar to those found at Harappa were found at Rupar, Rangpur, Lothal and Kalibangan, it was considered desirable to name it as Harappa Culture as the new sites were not covered by the Indus river and its tributaries. The present position is that while some people still continue to call it the Indus Civilization, others prefer to call it the Harappa Culture.

**Buildings.** Mohenjodaro seems to have been a well-planned city. Streets were broad and varied from  $13\frac{1}{2}$  feet to 33 feet in breadth. According to Mackay, the roads were so arranged that the prevailing winds could work as a sort of suction pump thereby cleaning the atmosphere automatically. They cut each other at right angles. The houses varied from the smallest ones of two rooms to a large one like a palace with a frontage of 85 feet and a depth of 97 feet, courtyard 32 feet square etc. Some of the structures might have been temples. A hole of 20 brick piers about 90 feet square has also been found. One of the outstanding features of the buildings at Mohenjodaro is their plainness. The entrances to the houses were in narrow lanes. There were no windows at all. Some rooms were built with an eye to their strategic position. Common walls were rare and the empty space between the walls of two houses was filled with bricks. The walls were pretty thick and it is possible that the buildings might have been of more than one storey.

The wells at Mohenjodaro are a remarkable feature of the city but that is not the case of Harappa. It speaks volumes for the technical perfection of the builders that most of the wells built thousands of years ago are in perfect working order up to the present day.

All that is necessary is to remove the debris and silt so as to use them for the supply of drinking water.

The most important feature of the houses at Mohenjodaro is the presence in them of one or more bathrooms, the floors of which were fully laid and were connected by means of drainage channels with the main street. )

The Great Bath of Mohenjodaro strikes every visitor to that place. It consists of an open quadrangle with verandahs backed by galleries and rooms on all sides, the swimming bath, wells from which the bath was filled and an upper storey of timber. The swimming bath is 30 feet  $\times$  23  $\times$  8 feet. There is a provision for flights of steps at the ends. The Bath is water-tight and its foundations are secure. "The lining of the tank" was made of finely-dressed bricks laid in gypsum mortar, about 4 feet thick ; backing this was an inch-thick, damp-proof course of bitumen. "It was farther stabilised by another thin wall of burnt bricks behind it ; then came a packing of crude brick and behind this again another solid rectangle of burnt bricks encompassing the whole." The Great Bath is still in such a condition that when I saw it in 1935 I felt that it was built during the 19th century as it resembled many of the tanks built in the Punjab at that time.

**Drainage.** The people of the Indus Valley had a perfect system of drainage. Brick-laid channels flowed through every street. They varied from 9" wide and 12" deep to double that size. The channels were covered with loose bricks which can be removed when necessary. Large channels were made of stone and were also covered with stone. Cess-pits were provided for the flow of the rain-water and sewage from the houses to flow into them. Long drains were provided at intervals with sumps so that the channels may be cleaned without much difficulty. )

**Water-supply.** The people of Mohenjodaro had an excellent supply of water. A large number of wells have been found in that city. However, the coping of the wells was only a few inches above the pavement and that was a source of danger to the people.

**Trade and Commerce.** There must have been a lot of trade and commerce. People must have cultivated wheat and barley which were ground by the muller and saddle quern and not by a circular grindstone. Date palm must have been cultivated.

**Diet.** As regards the diet of the people, it must have consisted of wheat, barley, milk products, fish, mutton, beef, pork, poultry, flesh of tortoises and turtles.

**Animals.** The animals domesticated by the people were the elephant, camel, pig, the buffalo, sheep, the humped bull and also probably horses and dogs. The remains of such wild animals as black rat, deer and mongoose have also been found. The figurines of bison, hare, monkey, tiger, bear and rhinoceros have also been excavated.

**Metals.** It appears that the people used gold, silver, copper, tin

and lead. However, the use of iron was not known. The other materials used by the people were bones, shells, ivory and faience.

**Dress.** As regards the dress of the people, it is not possible to describe the same definitely as no clothes of those people have come down to us. Our information is based on a large number of spindles made of pottery. Their various sizes indicate that both cotton and woollen threads must have been spun. The statues and the carvings on the seals found at different places also throw some light. It appears that women put on a skirt. A cloak might have been used as an extra protection covering arms and shoulders but not the breasts. Men wore short beards and whiskers. They used a band of cloth round their loins. They might have used a wrapper covering their left shoulder and passing below the right shoulder.

**Ornaments.** Ornaments were popular both among women and men. While both the sexes used necklaces, fillets, armlets, and finger-

rings, women alone used the girdles, nose studs, anklets etc. The ornaments of the rich were those of gold, silver, ivory, faience or semi-precious stones, but the poor used shell, bone, copper and terra-cotta for the same purpose. Holes were made into carnelian for girdles. It appears that hair was taken back from the forehead and then clipped or coiled in a knot with a fillet to support the same at the back of the head. In some cases, the hair was coiled in a heavy mass and was taken above the left ear in such a way as to cover the right shoulder. The use of combs was very common. Fillets and hair-pins must have been used for keeping the hair in order and tight.)



A dancing girl

**Amusements.** As regards their amusements, they preferred indoor hobbies to outdoor amusements. They did not take interest in hunting and chariot-racing. They enjoyed dancing and singing. The game of dice was also known to them. The large

number of toys found at Mohenjodaro show that the children were fond of playthings. Those toys were made of terra-cotta and were



of such things as rattles, whistles, birds, carts, figures of men and women etc.

**Pottery.** The pottery of the Indus Valley was generally made on the wheel. It was painted red and black. Some of it was glazed and mottled. It is pointed out that the glazed Indus pottery is "the earliest example of its kind in the ancient world." The domestic vessels were usually made of earth and had different shapes and forms. Some of them were goblets, heaters, offering stands, store-jars etc. Vessels of copper, bronze, silver and porcelain were also known. However, no vessels of iron have been found.

**Weapons.** As regards the weapons of war, those were axes, spears, daggers, slings and maces. Very few bows and arrows have been found. Masheads and alabaster, sandstone and cherty-limestone must have been used as weapons for individual protection in the jungles. There were three kinds of missiles made of baked clay. "Their shape, material, and the spot where they were found certainly lead us to regard them as weapons of offence rather of defence." Whether they were thrown by hand or projected from a sling can only be guessed, but the former is more likely. No shields, helmets or any other kind of defensive armour have been found. Most of the weapons were those of copper and bronze, but some of them were those of stone also.

As at present known, fortifications at the two major cities were confined to the citadels. The function of the armed citadel may have been as much the affirmation of domestic authority as a safeguard against external aggression.

**Art.** The representations of the animals carved on the seals indicate a high degree of artistic excellence. A few stone-images of Harappa have the finish and excellence of the Greek statues.

**Seals.** More than 500 seals have been discovered at various places. Those are made of terracotta and are small in size. These seals were found from time to time for a long period in the old bed of the river Ravi. They form the first hints or traces of the Indus Civilisation as noticed by historians like General Cunningham. According to Dr. Mackay, the seals are the only known inscriptions of the Indus Valley people from which some idea of the language of the people can be got. The stone and pottery seal-amulets provide the largest contribution to the subject of the religious beliefs of the Indus Valley people. Perhaps, the most interesting seal is that which depicts a nude deity with horns and three faces, seated on a stool in a religious attitude. Surrounding him are a large number of animals. The figure wears a large number of bangles on either arm and also a kind of head-dress. The view of Dr. Marshall was that the figure was that of Shiva. Not less than three seals bearing the representation of a deity have been found. In two cases, the deity is seated on a stool, but in the third case, it is seated on the ground. The deity is always nude and has a number of bangles on the arms. In all the cases, the deity has horns. The deity might have been a virgin goddess or the consort of a god.

Another seal has a horned goddess in the middle of a Pipal or fig tree before which another horned deity is also kneeling. The goddess and worshippers have long plaits of hair and also bangles on their arms. Behind the worshippers, there is a goat with a human face.

A seal from Mohenjodaro shows that the tiger was considered to be the emblem of a goddess. A goddess is seen on the horns of a goat with the body, hind legs and the tail of a tiger. According to Mackay, in early times the tiger goddess was looked upon as a consort of the deity, Shiva. A tiger also appears on two seals with the horns of a bull and it is possible that the bull was regarded as the vehicle of Shiva.

Another seal shows a buffalo which has obviously attacked a group of people and is standing victorious in the midst of its victims. It is possible that this is a representation of a deity overcoming its enemies.

According to Dr. Mackay, the seal-amulets are the most successful artistic achievements of the inhabitants of the Indus Valley. It appears that they were carried by practically the entire population of the two cities. The pictographic inscriptions on the seals do not refer to animals under them but denote the names and perhaps the titles.

**Religion.** We can form some idea of the religion of the Indus Valley people by a study of the seals, sealings, inscribed copper tables, stone statuettes and terracotta figurines.

**Mother-Goddess.** According to Sir John Marshall, the foremost among the Indus pantheon was the Mother-Goddess. A large number of terracotta female figures recovered from the Indus sites are considered to be representations of the Mother-Goddess. Similar figures have been found from the historic sites of the Kulli culture in South Baluchistan and the Zhob Valley in the north. The Zhob symbols wear hoods over their heads and the Kulli figures have a series of necklaces on their persons. Mother-Goddess models have been found all over Western Asia and, according to the archaeologists, the range of the cult of the Mother-Goddess at one time extended without break from the Indus to the Nile. To quote Sir John Marshall, "But in no country, the worship of the Divine Mother is so deep-rooted and universal as in India where she became a prototype of the 'Cosmic Energy' (Prakriti) and the counterpart of the 'Cosmic Soul' (Purusha). Here worship which originated in a matriarchal society in course of time formed the basis of later Saktism."

The cult of the Mother-Goddess did not dominate the Indus religion. The male gods loomed large on the horizon of that age. Pipal god was the supreme deity and a large number of subordinate male deities ruled over the destinies of the poor mortals inhabiting the Indus region.]

**Tree-worship.** The seals and painted pottery of the Indus Valley show the figures of the Pipal and Acacia trees. They were regarded as celestial plants and were supposed to be inhabited by

divine spirits. The former was the abode of the Supreme Deity of the Indus Valley and on account of the extreme sanctity attaching to that plant, its symbolic representation formed the crest of the horned head-dresses of the deities of lower grades. The Pipal was the tree of creation and knowledge and was believed to impart highest knowledge to those who donned its branches on their heads. This privilege was enjoyed by the gods alone.

The tree of life figures with great frequency on the seals of the Indus Valley. Around this magic plant, most of the adventures and mighty exploits of the gods and national heroes of the Indus Valley were grouped. The Sami tree is usually identified with Jand or Jandi. The Jand tree is still believed to be the abode of a Devata and many religious ceremonies are performed under it.

**Siva.** A male deity is shown on a seal with three faces and eyes and seated on a low Indian throne in the posture of a Yogi with animals on each side. The deity is considered to be "the prototype of the historic Siva". The figure has a pair of horns over its head and that indicates that it is the figure of a deity. The presence of



Limestone Statue, Mohenjodaro

the animals justifies the title of Siva as Pasupati or Lord of Animals.



The people of the Indus Valley also practised the worship of Linga and Yoni symbols. Some of the polished stones have been identified with the Linga and other pierced stones have been identified with the Yoni. The likelihood that both Siva and Linga worship have been inherited by the Hindus from the Indus Valley people is perhaps reinforced by the prevalence of the bull (the vehicle of Siva) or of bull-like animals amongst the seal-symbols.

The people had faith in amulets and charms and that shows that they were afraid of demons. There was also the practice of Yoga. The worship of the sacred "incense-burners" was also prevalent.

Wheeler says that the importance, not necessarily the deification of water in the life of the Indus Valley people, is stressed by the Great Bath at Mohenjodaro and by the almost extravagant provision for bathing and drainage throughout the city. Purification by bath or ceremonial ablutions must have been a part and parcel of the religion of the people. )

**Disposal of the dead.** It appears that the people of the Indus Valley disposed of their dead by the method of cremation. A large number of urns containing human bones and ashes, and vessels of burnt and other offerings for the use of the dead in after-life have also been found. Similar urns have been found by Sir Aurel Stein on many sites in Baluchistan. Cases of burial are very rare and belong to the time of the decline of the civilisation.

**The Indus Script.** The script of the Indus civilisation has defied the attempts of the scholars to penetrate into its mystery. There are many views regarding its origin. Some scholars hold that the Indus Civilisation was pre-Aryan and its people, language and script were Dravidian. The strongest among those who hold this view is Rev. Heras and a similar view was held by Sir John Marshall. Rev. Heras reads the Indus script from the left to the right and transliterates the same into the Tamil language. However, it is difficult to accept this hypothesis as we have absolutely no knowledge of the Tamil language in the fourth millennium B.C. Under the circumstances, it is difficult to verify the contention of Rev. Heras.

In his book called "The Indo-Sumerian Seals Deciphered", Waddel maintained that the Indus Valley was colonised by the Sumerians in the fourth millennium B.C. and they introduced their language and script there. He tried to prove the Sumerian origin of the Indo-Aryans and on the seals he read the names of the Aryan kings and their capitals as mentioned in the Vedic literature. ) Dr. Pran Nath also holds the view that the Indus script is derived from the Sumerian script. On account of the pictographic nature of the earliest scripts of Egypt, Crete, Western Asia and India, there is some resemblance in them but in the present state of our knowledge it is impossible to say with certainty as to whether the Sumerians borrowed their script from the Indus Valley or the people of the Indus Valley borrowed their script from the Sumerian script. According to the historical traditions, the authors of the Sumerian civilisation themselves came from outside. The names of the gods and heroes

responsible for the introduction of writing in Sumer appear to be Indian and consequently it is difficult to accept the view of Waddell and Dr. Pran Nath.

There is also another theory according to which the people of the Indus Valley were either the Aryans or the Asuras who later on migrated to Mesopotamia and Western Asia. According to them, the Indus script originated in India and it was from here that it was taken to Sumer. )

The view of Mr. Morris J. Spivack, an American Archaeologist, is that most of the inscriptions on the Indus seals embody the Hebraic legends relating to cosmogonic and other biblical events such as the Genesis, the Fall of Adam and Eve and Noah's Great Flood. The view of Sudhansu Kumar Ray is that the language of Indus Valley Civilization was a kind of archaic Sanskrit. Mr. M.V.N. Krishna Rao maintains that the language of the Indus people was near the Vedic language or one of its early forms. Dr. Fateh Singh, Director, Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur has read Sanskrit in the Indus seals. A team of Finnish scholars working at the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen, has come to the conclusion that the Indus civilization was pre-Aryan and Dravidian. The basic alphabet of the Indus script consisted of about 350 signs. Mortimer Wheeler says : "The conditions requisite for the interpretation of the script—a bilingual inscription including a known language, or a long inscription with significant recurrent features—are not yet present. A majority of the available inscriptions are short, with an average of half a dozen letters ; the longest has no more than seventeen. Their variety prevents the assumption that they relate to the limited designs on the seals. It has been conjectured, with all reserve, that they may consist largely, though not entirely, of proper names, sometimes with the addition of a patronymic, a title or a trade, we do not know."

**The Indus People.** The question of the race of the Indus Valley people is a tedious one. According to some, they came from Sumer. There are others who hold the opinion that the Indus people were the same as Dravidians. It is pointed out that there was a time when the Dravidians inhabited the whole of India including Sindh, Baluchistan and the Punjab. Gradually, they migrated to Mesopotamia also. The very fact that the Dravidian language is still spoken by the Brahmi people of Baluchistan, is taken to support the Dravidian theory. There is another school of thought which maintains that the Indus people were Aryans and they went from India to Western Asia. There is also a possibility that the Indus people might have belonged to an altogether separate race. However, it is pointed out that there is a greater possibility of a mixture and fusion of races than the existence of a single race.

*Age of the Indus Civilisation.* (1) Writers like Sir John Marshall have held the view that the Indus Civilisation belongs to the third millennium B.C. The Indus Civilisation is dated primarily by its contacts with the proto-historic cities of Mesopotamia in the latter half of the third millennium B.C. As many as 29 or 30 seals of the

Indus style have been found from Ur, Kish, Tell Asmar, Umma, Lagash, Susa, Tepe Gawra etc. Some of these seals are dated and on the basis of their dates, the Indus Valley Civilisation has also been dated. Wheeler places those seals between 2500 and 1500 B.C.

(2) At Tell Asmar, bone inlays of the Indus kidney-shape have been found. At Tell Agrab, there has been found a humped bull which links it with the Indus Civilisation.

(3) (According to Wheeler, an indubitable link with the West is provided by the fragment of a stone found at a low level at Mohenjodaro. Similar stones have been found at Ur, Kish, Lagash and Susa. Etched beads of distinctive and identical type were used by the people of the Indus Valley and by the citizens of Akkadian Tell Asmar. Gold disc-beads with axial tube are identified at Mohenjodaro and Mesopotamian sites of about 2300 B.C.) An earlier contact is possible on account of the similarity of the pattern on a silver ring from Mohenjodaro with a similar pattern at Ur. A bead from Harappa has been identified with another bead from Knossos. The significance of this identity is emphasized by the difference between other beads of the same type which have also been analysed. The conclusion drawn is that "this identity of composition of specimens from Harappa and Knossos can mean only one thing; that they were derived from the same source. Also that Sumer was not implicated other than possibly having acted as a trade or other route over which the beads were passed." The Knossos bead came from the Temple repositories of Middle Minoan III. The approximate date of 1600 B.C. is arrived at. At Tell Brak in North Syria, segmented beads of glazed steatite go back to about 3200 B.C.

(4) The approximate date of the Indus Valley Civilisation is also determined by a reference to the age of the Rigveda. It is pointed out that the Rigveda was composed about 1500 B.C. It is mentioned in the Rigveda that the Aryans had to fight against peoples who had walled cities. It is also pointed out that the Indus Valley people may be the same persons who are mentioned in the Rigveda. Excavations at Mohenjodaro show that men, women and children were massacred in the streets and houses and were left lying there or were crudely covered without last rites. A large number of skeletons in various forms have been found. In one case, a group of skeletons has been found "in strangely contorted attitudes and crowded together." It is pointed out that they were "the remains of a family who tried to escape from the city with their belongings at the time of a raid but were stopped and slaughtered by the raiders." Again, "there seems no doubt that these four people were murdered. It can be regarded as almost certain that these skeleton remains date from the later end of the occupation of Mohenjodaro and are not later intrusions. The facts that some of the bones of one of these skeletons rested on the brick pavement of the wall-room and that the skull of another lay on the floor of a (brick-lined) sediment-pit (adjoining the entrance) prove beyond doubt that both wall-room and pit were in actual use when the tragedy took place.

On the basis of circumstantial evidence, it is pointed out that



this massacre of the people of Mohenjodaro took place at the hands of the Aryan invaders. This coincides with the view of Wheeler that the Indus Civilisation flourished between 2500 B.C. and 1500 B.C.

(5) It is also pointed out that five seals of the Indus pattern having the same script and humped bull have been found at different sites in Mesopotamia and Elam. Two seals found at Ur and Kish belong to the pre-Sargonid period which was before 2800 B.C. Mr. Woolley discovered at Ur in 1932 another Indian seal which was ascribed by him to a period about 2800 B.C. At Tell Asmar have been found cylinder seals, pots and tablets of the reign of Sargon of Akkad (about 2500 B.C.). One seal impression actually mentions the name of Shudurul who was the last king of that dynasty. Other things have also been found which seem to have been imported from the Indus Valley. A seal depicts animals such as elephant and rhinoceros which are foreign to Babylonia. On the other hand, a Mohenjodaro seal depicts a procession of animals in which the elephant and rhinoceros are placed side by side. It is inferred from above that this seal must have been imported from the Indus Valley about 2500 B.C.

(6) Dr. C.L. Fabri places the main Indus culture between 2800 and 2500 B.C. on the evidence of a pottery jar with a Sumero-Babylonia inscription found at Mohenjodaro. A comparison of the plain and painted ware in the Indus Valley with similar specimens at Sumer, Elam and Egypt shows that the Indus Valley Civilisation flourished about 2500 B.C.

**Comparison of Indus and Vedic Civilisations—**(1) A comparison of the Indus Valley Civilisation with the Vedic Civilisation is both interesting and instructive. It is to be observed that most of the animals known to the Indus people were also known to the Vedic people and those were sheep, cows, bulls and dogs. The animals hunted down by the Vedic people were antelopes, boars, buffalos, lions and elephants and they were also familiar to the Indus people. However, while horses were domesticated in the Vedic period, that was not the case with the people of the Indus Valley.

(2) As regards the use of metals, the gold ornaments in the Vedic period consisted of ear-rings, necklaces, bracelets, anklets, garlands and jewels for the neck. The ornaments of the Indus people included necklaces, finger-rings, armlets and fillets for both the sexes and anklets, ear-rings and girdles only for women. The ornaments of the rich were made of gold, silver, ivory or precious stones, but those of the poor were made of shells, bones, copper and terracotta.

(3) The Vedic people knew of some kind of armour which was made of metal plates sewn together. They also had helmets made of Ayas or gold. However, the Indus people had no armours. Moreover, there was a paucity of weapons of war with the Indus people. The case was different with the Vedic people. They were war-like people and were ready for offensive and defensive wars. They led expeditions into the neighbouring territories for booty and conquests.

(4) The treatment of hair by men and women of the Vedic



period bears some resemblances to the practice at Mohenjodaro. The hair was combed and oiled. Women wore it plaited. There is a mention of a maiden wearing her hair in four plaits. Women sometimes wore their hair in coils. Men grew beards.

(5) Cotton industry was known both to the Vedic Aryans and the people of the Indus Valley. There is a reference in the Vedas to the weaver, his loom, the shuttle, the warp and the woof. Likewise, a large number of spindle whorls have been found at Mohenjodaro. The material for textiles was both cotton and wool.

(6) The Vedic people were essentially rural and the Indus people were primarily urban. The Indus people were concentrated mostly in the cities, but in the case of the Vedic people, village was the backbone of their social and economic life. Mohenjodaro was a well-planned city. Its drainage system was excellent. However, such was not the case with the Vedic people who lived on the countryside.

(7) Iron was not known at all to the Indus people, but it was known to the Vedic Aryans.

(8) The religion of the Indus people differed from that of the Vedic people. The Indus people worshipped the tree, animals, Siva, Mother-Goddess etc. They also worshipped the Phallus but the Vedic people hated the same. The Indus people worshipped animals and had faith in amulets and charms. The Vedic people worshipped a large number of deities which stood for the principal phenomena of nature, viz., Prithvi, Varuna (sky), Indra and the Sun. The Sun was worshipped in five forms and those were Surya, Vishnu, Savitri, Mitra and Pushan. The other gods worshipped by the Aryans were Rudra, Marutas, Vayu, Vata, Ushas and Asvins. The Agni and Soma were also worshipped. The Gandharvas and Apsaras were also the object of worship. Sacrifices were performed to please the gods and things like milk, grain, ghee, flesh and Soma were offered.

(9) The Indus people preferred indoor hobbies to outdoor amusements. Unlike the Vedic people, they did not take interest in hunting and chariot-racing, but they were fond of dice.

(10) The diet of the Indus people consisted of wheat, barley, bread and milk products. As regards the Vedic people, milk was the most important food along with its products such as butter and curd. Cakes of rice and barley were eaten mixed with ghee. Meat generally consisted of the animals sacrificed. The Soma drink was popular but spirituous liquors were condemned.

(11) In the Indus Valley, women put on a skirt. A cloak might have been used as an extra protection. Men generally used a band of cloth round their loins. They might have used a wrapper covering their left shoulder and falling on the right shoulder. The Vedic people used an under-garment which was generally made of sheep-wool. Ascetics used skins. There is also a reference to embroidered garments.

(12) The people of the Indus Valley attached too much importance to bath. This is amply proved by the bathing arrangements made on a large scale. The Vedic Aryans do not seem to have attached much importance to this.

(13) The Indus pottery was generally wheel-made and was painted red and black. Some of it was glazed also. However, the Vedic pottery was a simple one. The accuracy and consistency of the weights of the Indus people was of a very high order. It may not have been so in the case of the Vedic people.

According to Childe, "The Indus Civilisation represents a very perfect adjustment of human life to a specific environment that can only have resulted from years of patient effort. And it has endured ; it is already specifically Indian and forms the basis of modern Indian culture. In architecture and industry, still more in dress and religion, Mohenjodaro reveals features that have always been characteristic of historical India." (*New Light on the Most Ancient East*, pp. 183-4).

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                       |  |
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## CHAPTER V

### THE ARYANS

**Original Home of the Aryans.** The original home of the Aryans is a matter of great controversy and in spite of the lapse of time and the researches of scholars from time to time, there does not exist any unanimity of opinion. However, it is desirable to refer to some of the important theories regarding the original home of the Aryans.

(1) The most important theory which held the field for a long time was that *the Aryans originally lived in Central Asia*. In the "Lectures on the Science of Languages", Prof. Max Muller, a great German scholar of comparative languages, pointed out that the ancestors of the Indians, Greeks, Persians, Romans, Germans and the Celts must have lived together originally. This was revealed by a study of the languages of these people. The *Pitri* and *Matri* in Sanskrit were the same as the *Pidar* and *Madar* in Persian, *Father* and *Mother* in English and the *Pater* and *Mater* in Latin. These were not trade terms but fundamental words of everyday use in families which could have been adopted only if the ancestors of these people lived at one common place. The view of Max Muller was that the main stream of the Aryans flowed towards the North-West. The Aryans of Europe migrated by a route South of the Caspian through Asia Minor to Greece and Italy. One of their groups came to India through the North-West passages.)

In support of the theory, it is also pointed out that the people speaking the Indo-Germanic group of languages were spread over an area extending from the Brahmaputra to the Atlantic. The languages of the Vedas and the Zend-Avesta have changed the least but the Celtic languages have changed enormously. The original home of the Aryans must have been nearest to the lands occupied by the Indians and the Iranians and that probably was Central Asia. There is also a tradition in the Zend-Avesta that the first creation of man took place in Airyana Voejo and from there the Iranians went to Iran. Most of the places connected with Airyana Voejo are situated in or about Central Asia. This view is also supported by a study of the comparative languages which shows that the original home of the Aryans was a region "where trees like birch and pine grew and where winter was familiar with the snow and ice." A language called Tocharian, which is spoken in North-West Afghanistan, is allied to Centum which is a Western and European language. A Babylonian tablet of 2100 B.C. shows that horse was newly introduced among the ass-using people of Babylon. It is mentioned as "an ass from the East" or "from the mountains." From this it is concluded that it refers to the coming of the people from Iran or beyond who founded

the Kissite dynasty of Babylon. According to Rapson, this refers to the eruption of Aryans from the North-East. Central Asia was the breeding place of the Tartar hordes who later on went to India, Persia, the Euphrates Valley and Europe. This region could have been also the original home of the Aryans. The words for salt and sea are not common to the various Aryan languages and from this it is concluded that the original home of the Aryans must have been an inland country. Central Asia possesses all those things which are considered necessary for the specialization in language and culture. Those things are vast plains undivided by mountains, deserts or forests, abundance of food and a temperate climate.

Critics point out that it is improbable that the Aryans with such a superior civilisation could have been cradled in one of the most barren tracts of land in Asia. However, it can be pointed out that the Central Asia of the Aryans must have been different from what it is today. The climate of this region has changed even within the historic times. It is the testimony of the geologists that there has been a decrease in rainfall in this region and consequently agriculture has also been affected. The regions which were described as fertile by ancient writers are at present deserts. Sir Aurel Stein has shown that there was a great civilisation in Chinese Turkistan, but that is not the case today. Even Hiuen Tsang referred to a flourishing civilisation in Central Asia when he came to India during the 7th century A.D.

(2) / The late Bal Gangadhar Tilak was of the opinion that the original home of the Aryans was the Arctic region. This view was propounded by him in his book "*The Arctic Home of the Aryans.*" Working on the theory that the earth is losing heat day by day, Tilak came to the conclusion that the North Polar regions were at one time habitable areas and the Aryans originally lived there. Tilak critically ransacked the Sanskrit literature and came to the above conclusion. The Vedas refer to days and nights lasting for six months which are to be found in the Arctic region. The varying and continuous Ushas which are divided into several parts with elaborate rites are stated to be the same as the perpetual day of the astronomers. The movements of the stars of the Polar region are also described in detail to support the view. It is pointed out that the horizontal movement of the stars is a peculiar experience of the Polar region. The books of the Iranians point out that the original home of the Aryans had long winters. The traditional Elysium of the Hindus is the Meru in the North.)

The theory of Tilak might seem strange to the modern mind which can think of only the severe winter of the Arctic region. However, the geologists have proved that in pre-historic times this region had a congenial climate and a perpetual spring. Under the circumstances, the theory of Tilak cannot be summarily rejected. His astronomical calculations should be given due consideration.

(3) (According to A.C. Dass, a Bengali historian, the original home of the Aryans was the Sapt-Sindhu or the Punjab. This point of view was put forward by him in his book called "*Rigvedic India.*")



The Sapt-Sindhu was irrigated by seven rivers, viz., the Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej and Sarasvati. His view was that the geographical conditions described in the Rigveda point out to this region. India was connected with Western Asia by land and the Aryans migrated from Sapt-Sindhu to the West. To quote him, "The original cradle of the Aryans was, therefore, Sapt-Sindhu, which included the beautiful valley of Kashmir on the North and Gandhara on the West. Its southern boundary was Rajputana (then was not desert) and its eastern boundary covered the Gangetic trough. It was completely cut off from Southern India by sea, but it was connected by land with Western Asia in the direction of Gandhara and Kabulistan through which waves after waves of Aryan migration advanced to the West and to Europe. The earliest Aryan tribes had left Sapt-Sindhu having pushed farthest into Europe by those who followed them on long intervals and in different stages." This theory has not been accepted by the scholars of the world and has not been taken very seriously.)

(4) (According to Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Pargiter, the original home of the Aryans was Tibet. This view has been expounded by them in the Satyarth Prakash and Ancient Indian Historical Tradition respectively.

Those who support the Indian origin of the Aryans point out that the Europeans and Iranians must have migrated from India. The Vedas were composed in India and exist in India. The modern structure of Indian society and religion can be directly traced from the Vedic institutions. Neither in the Vedas nor in other Sanskrit literature do we find any tradition which refers to the immigration of the Aryans into India from outside.) If they had come from another country, there ought to have been some tradition about the same. However, the critics of the theory of Indian origin of the Aryans point out that the things with which the early Aryans were familiar were not Indian. They were familiar with birch, pine, oak and willow and these do not grow on the plains of India. They were not acquainted with rice, tiger, lion, elephant and banana tree. They considered the elephant to be a strange animal and called it a Mriga (deer) with Hastin (trunk). According to Lassen, "None of the phenomena of speech, customs or ideas observable among the other cognate nations indicate an Indian origin." According to Schlegel, the Aryans spread over so large a part of the world that they could not have come from its Southern extremity. They must have started from a central place in various directions. It is also pointed out that if the Aryans originally inhabited India, they ought not to have migrated from this fertile region to less hospitable places like Iran and Europe.

(5) (According to another view, the West Baltic coast was the home of the Aryans. This view is based on the ground that the oldest and the simplest artifacts of the period following by palaeolithic age and the tasteful and technically perfected stone implements are found there in abundance. However, critics point out that in that case the large number of beautiful stone artifacts of New Zealand should give a high degree of antiquity to the Maori culture.)

(6) (According to Nehring, "Tripolje culture is the culture of the original Indo-Europeans and the Indo-Europeans' original home lay indeed also in South Russia, but extended far beyond to the West.")

(7) (On the basis of his substratum theory that a later language is always fundamentally modified by the older language over which it spreads, Pokorny came to the conclusion that "as the original home of the Indo-Europeans before the dispersal of the tribes (C. 2400 B.C.) should be regarded the wide stretches of land between the Weser and the Vistula and beyond these up to White Russia and Volhynia". The region indicated as the cradle of the Indo-Europeans is a very wide one.)

(8) According to Brandenstein, the undivided Indo-Europeans lived originally in what is now called the Kirghiz steppes from where the Indo-Iranian tribes moved eastwards and the other tribes at a later date westwards. The tribes that moved towards the west were divided into two groups. One of them went to North Europe and the others went to Ukraine etc.

(9) (German scholars have proposed Germany as the original home of the Aryans. However, this view is rejected on the ground that in pre-historic times and long afterwards that country was covered with forests. Sigmund Feist has proved that the Germans, though they knew an Indo-European dialect, did not belong to the Indo-European stock.)

(10) (According to Morgan, the cradle of the Indo-Europeans was in Western Siberia. According to his view, the population of Siberia poured out both towards the Danube and towards Iran and the Far East. As Siberia became colder, the inhabitants of the steppes were forced to emigrate.)

(11) The view which is generally accepted is that the original home of the Aryans was in South-East Europe. According to Prof. MacDonell, the common trees like the oak, the beech and the willow and the common animals like the horse and the cow with which the ancestors of the Aryans were familiar, as is shown by a study of the Rigveda and Zendavesta, could be found in those days in South-Eastern Europe. According to Dr. Giles, the original home of the Aryans was "the area which is bounded on its eastern side by the Carpathians, on its south by the Balkans, on its western side by the Austrian Alps and Bohmer Wald, and on the north by the Erzgebirge and the mountains which link them up with the Carpathians," i.e., the plains of Austria and Hungary. The ancestors of the Indians, Greeks, Germans and English lived originally at some common place. According to Dr. Giles, when they were all living at one place, they were known as "Wiros." They lived together for a pretty long time. They knew the art of agriculture and called themselves as Arya or Airya. The words Arya or Airya mean the persons living on agriculture or persons of good family. The Aryans of India came to be known as the Indo-Aryans.

Expansion of Aryans in India. Dr. Hoernle has put forward

his theory of double invasion of India by the Aryans. The first horde of the Aryans came to the Punjab and settled there. They came along with their families. Then came their second invasion. As they found the route by the Kabul Valley blocked, they pushed their way through Gilgit and Chitral and entered like a wedge into the midland country which extended from the Himalayas on the north to the Vindhya in the south and from Sirhind in eastern Punjab in the west to the confluence of the Yamuna and the Ganges in the east. The second group developed its system of sacred rites on the banks of the Saraswati, the Yamuna and the Ganges. The result was that the Punjab which was inhabited by the first group came to be considered as an unholy land and the land between the Saraswati and Drishadvati i.e., Brahmavarta, came to be considered as the holy land. The theory of Dr. Hoernle is based on a study of the Indian languages. According to him, Punjabi, Rajasthani and eastern Hindi belonged to the first group of invaders and western Hindi was the language of the second group of invaders.

The theory of Dr. Hoernle has also been supported by Sir George Grierson who was the Director of the Linguistic Survey of India and as such possessed a unique knowledge of Indian languages. His conclusion was that there was a world of difference between the western Hindustani and such languages as Sindhi, Kashmiri, Marathi, Bengali, Bihari, Assamese and Oriya which were otherwise closely related to one another. To quote him, "In fact, at an early period of the linguistic history of India, there must have been two sides of Indo-Aryan dialects, one the language of the midlands and the other the group of dialects forming the outerland. It is concluded from above that the Aryans entered India in two separate distinct bands."

It is also pointed out that "it is difficult to account for the marked divergence of type that distinguishes the people east of Sirhind from those of the Punjab. Had there been no distinct incursion coming in like a wedge, no such sharp contrast would be discernible. One type would melt into the other by imperceptible gradations and scientific observations and popular impressions would not concur as they had in affirming that a marked change takes place somewhere about the longitude of Sirhind."

C.V. Vaidya also comes to a similar conclusion by his study of the Epics. According to him, the Pandavas and their kinsmen represented the second band of invaders and the battle of Kurukshetra was the victory of the second group over the first group. The system of polyandry was prevalent among the Pandavas as they could not bring their women with them on account of the difficulty of the passage through which they came to India. The physical differences between the people of the Punjab and those of the Gangetic Valley point out to a similar conclusion.

However, Prof. Rapson has criticised the theory of two invasions in these words : "The theory is made improbable by the difficulties of the route suggested and some of the arguments advanced in its favour are demonstrably mistaken. There is no such break



of continuity between the tribes of Rigveda and peoples of later literature as it presupposes...Both of the facts mentioned above the abrupt transition from the Indo-Aryan to the Indo-Dravidian type and the extension of Aryan influence from Brahmavarta to Brahamarshidesa—are best understood if we remember the natural features which connect the plain of the Indus with the plain of the Ganges. This is the strait of habitable land which lies between the desert and the mountains...It is in this strait that the decisive battles on which the fate of India had depended have been fought; here too we may suppose that the progress of racial migrations from the north-west in pre-historic times must have been checked. Both politically and ethnologically it forms a natural boundary. In the age of the Rigveda, the Aryans had not broken through the barrier though the Jumna is mentioned in a hymn as though a battle had been won on its banks. It was only at some later date that the country between the upper Jumna and Ganges and the district of Delhi was occupied...The epoch of Indo-Aryan tribal migration was definitely closed. It was succeeded by the epoch of Indo-Aryan colonisation."

Prof. Chanda has given a new theory of his own. According to him, the early Aryan invaders belonged to the dolichocephalic brand and they occupied the greater portion of Hindustan. The later Aryan invaders belonged to the brachy-cephalic brand. When they found their way blocked by the early invaders, some of them managed to reach lower Gangetic plain by crossing over the tableland of Central India and others went to Kathiawar and ocean. Chanda's theory does not explain the pre-dominance of the long-headed people of the Punjab. It also does not account for the change of head form towards broadness from the Punjab to the Gangetic Valley. There is also a gradual change in the form of the head and nose from the Yamuna to the lower Gangetic Valley. There are also diversities between the people of Kashmir, Gujrat, Maharashtra and Bengal although they are stated to belong to the same race. Our conclusion is that the nature of the Aryan invasion or invasions cannot be satisfactorily solved. It is difficult to separate the one group of invaders from the other group after the lapse of centuries.

(When the Aryans came to the Punjab, they carried fire and sword and the result was that the original inhabitants were completely exterminated. There seems to be a reference to the wars between the Aryans and the non-Aryans in the Rigveda. After having overpowered the Dasyus and occupied the Punjab, the Aryans began to struggle for supremacy among themselves. They also began to expand towards the east and south-east. As their number was not large and the territory was a huge one, there was no necessity of following a policy of extermination. The children and wives of the natives were made slaves. While the Aryans were in occupation of the Gangetic region, they were affected by the Dravidian blood and that explains the difference in the stature, complexion and noses of the people of the Gangetic Valley. The Gangetic Valley was occupied by a policy of blood and iron and not by peaceful negotiation. On account of the contact of the Aryans with non-Aryans, strict



rules were framed to maintain the purity of the Aryan blood. The non-Aryans were called by the name of Sudras.

As regards the conquest of Magadha, Anga, Vanga and Kalinga, the non-Aryans were very strong in those territories and consequently could not be absorbed by the Aryans. They continued to have their own social organisation and consequently eastern India was not thoroughly Aryanised. It was the dominance of these regions by the non-Aryans that helped the rise of Buddhism and Jainism there.

If the Aryans occupied the north of India by a policy of conquest, that was not so in the case of south India. Our knowledge of the Epics tells us that the Rishis or sages played an important part in this matter. As a matter of fact, Aryan penetration into the Deccan was carried out under the leadership of the sages such as Agastya. Although the sages were troubled a lot and sometimes they had to seek protection from the Kshatriya rulers, they continued their work of peaceful penetration into the Deccan and ultimately succeeded in their mission. The Brahmans of the Deccan still retain memories of their migration from the north. However, as the number of the Aryans who went to the Deccan was not very large and as the people were not completely Aryanised, the Dravidian culture remained dominant in that region. Even the little influence that was there in the Deccan must have lessened after the Muslim conquest of northern India and the overthrow of the Hindu power. )

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE VEDIC LITERATURE

The word "Veda" is derived from the Sanskrit root "Vid" (to know) and thus the word "Veda" means "knowledge". The Hindus consider the Vedas to be revealed books and give them the titles of *Apaurusheya* (not made by man) and *Nitya* (Eternal). It is contended that the Rishis wrote under inspiration from God. However, it is pointed out that the Vedic hymns were composed by ancient Rishis or seers of great antiquity. They were handed over by them from generation to generation. When the Indo-Aryans settled down in the Punjab, the Vedic hymns were compiled into books and given their present form. The Vedic hymns seem to have been written at different times by different people. In some cases, women and men of low castes were the authors of the hymns. The Vedas were considered to be so sacred that they were learnt by heart.<sup>1</sup>

Thus they came to be known as the *shruti*. The purity of the Vedic texts was maintained as they were considered to be sacred and not worthy to be changed by anybody. Moreover, the hymns were memorised without being understood and when the people did not know their meaning, there were lesser chances of their being changed by the substitution of new words or verses.

As regards the age of the Vedas, Jacobi's view was that the

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1. According to Prof. Max Muller, "It is of little avail in researches of this kind to say that such a thing is impossible. We can form no opinion of the powers of memory in a state of society so different from ours as the Indian Parishads are from our Universities. Even at the present day, when manuscripts are neither scarce nor expensive, the young Brahmins who learn the songs of the Vedas and the Brahmins and the Sutras, invariably learn them from oral tradition and know them by heart. They spend year after year under the guidance of their teacher, learning a little, day after day, repeating what they have learnt as part of their daily devotion, until at last they have mastered their subject and are able to become teachers in turn.

"How then was the Veda learnt? It was learnt by every Brahmana during twelve years of his studentship (forty-eight). Pratisakhya gives us a glimpse into the lecture rooms of the Brahmanic colleges. The pupils embrace their master, and say 'Sir, read'. The master gravely says 'Om' i.e. 'Yes'. He then begins to say a Prasna (a question) which consists of three verses. In order that no word may escape the attention of his pupils, he pronounces all with the high accent, and repeats certain words twice.

"After the Guru (teacher) has pronounced a group of words, consisting of three or sometimes (in long compounds) of more words, the first pupil repeats the first word, and when anything is to be explained, the teacher stops him and says, 'Sir'. After it has been explained by the pupil who is at the head of the class, the permission to continue is given with the words 'Well, Sir.' After the words of the teachers have thus been repeated by one, the next pupil has to apply to him with the words, 'Sir'....After a section of three verses has thus been gone through, all the pupils have to rehearse it again and again."

Vedic civilisation flourished between 4500 B.C. and 2500 B.C. According to Dr. Winternitz, "The available evidence merely proves that the Vedic period extends from an unknown past say X to 500 B.C., none of the dates 1200-500 B.C., 1500-500 B.C., and 2000-500 B.C., which are usually assumed, being justified by facts. Only it may be added, as a result of recent researches, that 800 B.C. should be substituted for 500 B.C. and that the unknown date more probably falls in the third rather than in the second millennium before Christ."

According to Kautilya, "The three Vedas, Sama, Rik and Yajur constitute the triple Vedas. These together with Atharvaveda, and the Itihasa Veda are known as the Vedas." The ordinary definition of the Veda does not include Itihasa.

The Vedic literature is divided into three periods. The first period refers to the time of the Samhitas. The second period refers to the period of the Brahmanas. The third period refers to the Upanishadas, Aranyakas and the Sutra literature.

**The Samhita.** As regards the Samhita period, it refers to the Samhitas or texts of the four Vedas, viz., Rigveda, Samveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda. As regards the *Samhita of the Rigveda*, it consists of 1,017 or 1,028 hymns of Suktas which have been divided into ten Mandalas or chapters according to the names of the Rishis and the subject-matter. It is stated that the oldest hymns are to be found in Mandalas from 2 to 9. The first and tenth Mandalas seem to be later additions. The tenth Mandal contains the Purushasukta. In their hymns, various powers of nature are considered as gods and their help is asked for. It gives us an insight into the political, social, economic and religious life of the people of Rigvedic India.

As regards the *Samaveda Samhita* or the "Book of Chants", it contains 1,549 or 1,810 hymns which are meant to be sung at the time of the Soma sacrifice by a special class of Brahmanas called Udgatris. There is practically nothing original in this Veda. With the exception of 75 hymns, the rest have been taken from the Rigveda Samhita. Even the 75 hymns can be traced in the other Vedic literature. The Samveda shows that the Aryans loved music and were not merely Puritans.

The *Yajurveda Samhita* or "The Book of Sacrificial Prayers" lays down the procedure for the performance of sacrifices. There are two main texts of the Yajurveda and those are the Black Yajurveda and the White Yajurveda. The White Yajurveda contains only hymns, but the Black Yajurveda contains a commentary in prose in addition to the text. It is probable that the Black Yajurveda is older.

For a long time, the Atharvaveda was not considered to be a Veda. However, it is being so recognised at present. From the historical and scientific points of view, it resembles the Rigveda. However, its spirit is different. There is a danger from the evil spirits and many from the use of magic to control demons and spirits have been given. Probably that was due to the influence of the pre-Aryan people. The

Atharvaveda is divided into 20 Books and contains about 731 hymns. Some of these hymns are in praise of gods also.

**Brahmanas.** The Brahmanas are the first specimens of praise in the world. They mark the transition from the Vedic to later Brahmanical social order. They explain the meaning of the sacrifices and also the methods of performing them. They are commentaries on the various hymns in the Vedas to which they are appended. They are called liturgies.

Each Brahmana is connected with one of the Samhitas. Thus, the Aitareya Brahmana and the Kaushitaki Brahmana belong to the Rigveda Samhita. While the Aitareya Brahmana deals with the Soma sacrifice alone, the Kaushitaki Brahmana deals with other sacrifices also. Three Brahmanas are connected with the Samveda Samhita and those are the Tandya-Maha-Brahmanas, Sadvinsa Brahmana and the Jaiminiya Brahmana. These Brahmanas contain a lot of information about the non-Aryans and also tell us the method by which the non-Aryans were to be admitted into the Aryan fold. The Satapatha Brahman belongs to the White Yajurveda Samhita and is the most exhaustive and important of the Brahmanas. It points out the progress of culture from Kuru-Panchala to Videha. The Gopatha Brahmana explains clearly the text of the Atharvaveda.

The difference between the Brahmanas connected with the various Vedas lies in the fact that the Brahmanas of the Rigveda emphasize the importance of the work of the Hotri-priest, the Samveda deals with the duties of the Udgatri priests and the Yajurveda contains the sacrifices to be performed by the Adhvaryu priests. As regards their fundamentals, all the Brahmanas agree with one another to a very great extent.

According to Max Muller, "However interesting the Brahmanas may be to students of Indian literature, they are of small interest to the general reader. The greater portion of them is simply twaddle, and what is worse, theological twaddle. No person who is not acquainted beforehand with the place which the Brahmanas fill in the history of the Indian mind, could read more than ten pages without being disgusted." However, according to Dr. Winternitz, the Brahmanas may be unpalatable from the point of view of reading, but they are indispensable to the understanding of the whole of the later religious and philosophical literature of the Indians, and highly interesting for the general science of religion. The Brahmanas are as invaluable authorities to the student of religion, for the history of sacrifices and of priesthood, as the Samhita of the Yajurveda is for the history of prayer.

**Aranyakas.** The Aranyakas are generally called the "Forest books." They are the concluding portions of the Brahmanas. The philosophical portions of the Brahmanas have been separated for the use and guidance of the hermits living in the jungles. The Aranyakas deal with mysticism and philosophy and not with rituals.

**The Upanishads.** According to Schopenhauer, "In the whole world, there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the



Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life—it will be the solace of my death.” According to Will Durant, “To our own day the Upanishads have remained to India what the New Testament is to Christendom—a noble creed occasionally practised and generally revered. Even in Europe and America, this wistful theosophy has won millions upon millions of followers, from lonely women and tired men to Schopenhauer and Emerson.” (*Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 415). According to Dr. Winternitz, “In fact the whole of the later philosophy of the Indians is rooted in the Upanishads. Their doctrines formed the foundations of Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana. The theological-philosophical systems of Shankara and of Ramanuja whose adherents at the present day are still counted by millions, are built upon this text-book. Moreover, all other philosophical systems and religions which have arisen in the course of the centuries . . . have sprung forth from the soil of the Upanishad doctrines.” (*History of Indian Literature*, p. 265). Again, “The Upanishads do not contain ‘superhuman conceptions’ but, human, absolutely human attempts to come nearer to the truth and it is this which makes them so valuable to us. For the historian, however, who pursues the history of human thought, the Upanishads have a yet far greater significance. From the mystical doctrines of the Upanishads one current of thought may be traced to the mysticism of the Persian Sufism, to the mystic-philosophical logos-doctrine of the Neo-Platonics and the Alexandrian Christians down to the teachings of the Christian mystics, Eckhart and Tauler, and finally to the philosophy of the great German mystic of the 19th century, Schopenhauer.” (*Ibid.*, p. 266).

The term Upanishad literally implies “sitting near.” Hence, its original meaning is the sitting down of the initiated pupil near the teacher or Guru for the purpose of a confidential communication of the secret doctrine (*Rahasya*) concerning the relation between Creator and the created individuals. The secret knowledge was not communicated to all the people but was communicated only to those who were considered to be worthy of it. There are 108 Upanishads which were written by various saints and sages between 800 and 500 B.C. However, the ancient Upanishads are the Brihadaranayaka Upanishad, Chhandogya Upanishad, Taaittiriya Upanishad, Aitareya Upanishad, Kena Upanishad and Kasaitaki Upanishad.

The Upanishads do not present a consistent system of philosophy but contain the opinions and lessons of many men who knew philosophy and religion. The fundamental doctrine which pervades all the genuine Upanishads can be summed up in the following sentence: “The Universe is the Brahman, but the Brahman is the Atman.” In other words, “The World is God, and God is my soul.” The two conceptions of Brahman and Atma are united in the philosophy of Upanishads. Deussen has expressed the fundamental ideal of the Upanishads in these words: “The Brahman, the power which presents itself to us materialised in all existing things, which creates, sustains, preserves, and receives back into itself again all words, this eternal infinite divine power is identical with the Atman, with that which, after stripping off everything external, we discover in

ourselves as our real most essential being, our individual self, the soul. This doctrine has found expression most pointedly and clearly in the Upanishad dictum which later became the confession of faith of millions of Indians, in the '*Tat Tvam Asi*' (so often quoted by Schopenhauer) "That art thou, i.e., the universe and the Brahman, that art thou thyself, or in other words, The world exists only in so far as thou thyself art conscious of it."

According to the Upanishads, the human intellect cannot understand the reality. We require some other organ of perception and understanding than our senses and reason. "Not by learning is the Atman (or Soul of the world) attained, not by genius and much knowledge of books . . . Let a Brahman renounce learning and become as a child. Let him not seek after many words, for that is mere weariness of tongue." Again, "The self-evident Brahman pierced the openings of the senses so that they turned outwards; therefore, man looks outward, not inward into himself; some wise man, however, with his eyes closed and wishing for immortality, saw the self behind." Before the inner reality can be felt, one has to wash away from himself all evil-doing and thinking, all turbulence of body and soul. As no water remains attached to the leaf of the lotus blossom, so no bad deed remains attached to him who knows this." "What the seeker seeks is Atman, the self of all selves, the soul of all souls, the immaterial, the formless Absolute in which we bathe ourselves when we forget ourselves." "The essence of ourself is not the body, or the mind, or the individual ego but the silent and formless depth of being within us, Atman." The conception of Atman is given in these words in the Upanishads: "This my Atman in my inmost heart is smaller than a grain of rice, or a barleycorn, or a mustard seed, or a millet grain . . . This my Atman, in my inmost heart is greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than the heavens, greater than all spheres. In him are all actions, all wishes, all smells, all tastes; he holds this all enclosed within himself; he speaks not, he troubles about nothing;—this my Atman in my inmost heart is this Brahman. With him, when I depart out of this life, shall I be united. For him to whom this knowledge has come, for him, indeed, there exists no doubt."

The Upanishads believe in the transmigration of souls. There is an effort to be released from the chain of reincarnations. King Janaka asked Yajnavalkya, the sage, as to how a person could escape from re-birth. The reply of Yajnavalkya was that such a thing could be achieved by the elimination of personal desires and union with God. "As flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and form, thus a wise man, freed from name and form, goes to the divine person who is beyond all."

The theme of the Upanishads is the mystery of this unintelligible world. The questions attempted are the following: "Whence are we born, where do we live, and whither do we go? O, Ye who know Brahman, tell us at whose command we abide here . . . Should time, or nature or necessity, or chance or the elements be considered the cause, or he who is called Purusha—the Supreme Spirit?"

**Vedangas.** Reference may be made in this connection to the Vedangas. The six important Vedangas are Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarna, Nirukta, Chhanda and Jyotisha. Siksha deals with pronunciation, Kalpa with ritual, Vyakarna with grammar, Nirukta with etymology, Chhanda with meter and Jyotisha with astronomy. Out of the six, the Siksha and Kalpa are considered to be very important.

In addition to the Vedangas, we have Upavedas or subsidiary Vedas. The important Upvedas are the Ayurveda which deals with medicine, Dhanurveda which deals with the art of warfare, Gandharva Veda which deals with the art of music and Shilpa Veda which deals with architecture.

**Six Darsanas.** The six schools of Indian philosophy form an important part of Vedic literature. The names of the six Darsanas are the Nyaya Darsan, Vaishesika Darsan, Sankhya Darsan, Yoga Darsan, Purva Mimansa Darsan and Uttar Mimansa Darsan. These Darsanas are stated to have been written between sixth century B.C. and the time of Asoka. The Darsanas are given in the form of Sutras or aphorisms which are short, definite and free from doubt. The ideas of Avidya, Maya, Purusa and Jiva are common to all the systems of philosophy. They all protest against the scepticism of the Buddhists and erect "a standard of objective reality and truth as opposed to eternal unstable flux." They all believe in the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the world. Excepting the Purva Mimansa, the other systems aim at Moksha or the release of the soul from rebirths. It is pointed out that the way to attain Moksha is through Chittasuddhi or purification of mind and Nishkam Karma or disinterested activity.

(1) *The Nyaya Darsan* was written by Gautam. According to it, Tarka or logic is the basis of all studies. It is the science of sciences. Knowledge can be acquired by four methods and those are Pratyaksha or intuition, Anumana or inference, Upma or comparison and Sabda or verbal testimony. Anumana is of three kinds, viz., Purvavat, Sesavat and Samanyato Drishtam. The Nyaya Darsan discusses the problem of doubt and ascribes it to the lapse of memory, or irregularities or aberrations in recognition or perception. Error is the apprehension of an object other than what it actually is. Truth reveals itself to those who have experience. The soul is real and its attributes are desires, aversions, volitions, etc. Consciousness cannot exist apart from the soul "as the brilliance of the flame cannot live apart from it." The Nyaya Darsan believes in God who is full of knowledge and bliss. The theory of rebirth is accepted and the people are asked to release themselves from its bondage.

(2) Kanada Rishi is the author of the *Vaishesika Darsana*. It is concerned with the Padarthas which are divided into six categories : Dravya or substance, Guna or quality, Karma or activity, Samanya or generality, Vishesha or particularity, and Samavaya or inference. The nine Dravyas or substances are earth, water, air, light, Akasha, time, space, soul and Manas. Atoms are the ultimate constituents of concrete things. Atoms cannot be destroyed. All that happens is that they take a different shape. There are 17 kinds of qualities. Karma or activity is transient and comes to an end at one stage or the other.



Kanada does not make any direct reference to God. His philosophy is not a complete philosophy of the universe.

(3) Kapila was the author of the *Sankhya Darsana*. Its fundamental principle is the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti. Prakriti is developed by three kinds of Gunas viz. Sattva Guna, Rajas Guna and Tamas Guna. Sattva Guna is the source of good and happiness. Rajas Guna is the source of activity and pain. Tamas Guna is the source of ignorance, sloth and apathy. The world is not regarded as real. It is not real in the sense that it does not exist for ever and after some time it is destroyed. The only thing that is eternal is Prakriti. While the Purusha is eternal, the Jivas are bound by the bondage of rebirth. The Sankhya Darsana does believe in the existence of God. Prakriti and Purusha are independent and not dependent upon God.

(4) Patanjali was the author of the *Yoga Darsana*. A person can be liberated from the circle of rebirths by the practice of Yoga or the concentration of mind. Efforts should be made to develop both the physical and spiritual sides of life. Eight methods have been suggested to achieve the objective and those are Yama or abstention, Niyama or observance, Asana or posture, Pranayama or regulation of breath, Pratyahara or withdrawal of the senses, Dhyana or fixed attention and Samadhi or concentration. By the practice of Hatha Yoga, body can be brought under control and made capable of bearing great strains. The control of the breath has a great steady-ing influence on the mind. The Yoga ends in Dhyana and Samadhi. When a man achieves the stage of Samadhi, he loses his connection with the world. God alone is the object of meditation and He alone helps us to attain our goal.

(5) Jaimini was the author of the *Purva Mimansa Darsana*. It is mainly concerned with rituals. The authority of the Vedas is accepted. The self is different from the body, senses and understanding. The plurality of souls is also recognised. Dharma is the scheme of right-living. There are two kinds of functions and those are Nitya Karma and the Kamya Karma. The one is done everyday and the other is done to achieve some special object. Offerings should be made to a number of deities. There is no necessity of a benevolent or active God. The Purva-Mimansa Darsana is concerned with purely mechanical ethics and does not attack the problem of ultimate reality. It is concerned only with Karmakand or the performance of sacrifices.

(6) Badarayana was the author of *Uttar Mimansa Darsana*. He wrote 555 Sutras which are divided into four chapters. The first chapter deals with the nature of Brahmana and his relation with the world and the individual souls. The second chapter deals with the objections. The third chapter discusses the ways and means of attaining Brahma Vidya. The fourth chapter deals with the fruits of Brahma Vidya and the future of the soul after death.



*Suggested Readings*

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|---------------|---|
| Das Gupta     | : History of Sanskrit Literature.   |
| Deussen, Paul | : The Philosophy of the Upanishads, 1919.                                   |
| Durant, Will  | : Our Oriental Heritage.  |
| Eggeling, J.  | : Shathpatha Brahmana.  |
| Garbe, R.     | : Philosophy of the Upanishads.   |
| Hume, R.E.    | : The Thirteen Principal Upanishads, 1921.                                  |
| Keith, A.B.   | : Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and<br>Upanishads (Cambridge, 1925). |
| Keith, A.B.   | : Aitareya Brahmana.  |
| Max Muller    | : Thirteen Principal Upanishads.  |
| Mitra, R.     | : Taittiriya Brahmana.  |

## CHAPTER VII

### RIGVEDIC INDIA

According to Sri Aurobindo, "The Rigveda is the one considerable document that remains to us from the early period of human thought of which the historic Eleusian and Orphic mysteries were the fading remnants, when the spiritual and psychological knowledge of the race was concealed, for reasons now difficult to determine, in a veil of concrete and material figures and symbols which protected the sense from the profane and revealed it to the initiate" (On The Veda).

**Age of the Rigveda.** The Rigveda is admittedly the oldest book in the world but there is no unanimity of opinion among the scholars with regard to the age of its composition. The opinions of the scholars differ not to the extent of centuries, but to the extent of thousands of years. Some lay down the year 1000 B.C. as the earliest limit while others fix the same between 3000 and 2500 B.C.

(1) The view of Max Muller was that the Rigveda Samhita must have been completed before 1000 B.C. He assumed 200 years for the Brahmana period, 200 years for the Mantra period and also 200 years for the composition of the Rigveda itself. In his Gifford Lectures on "Physical Religion" in 1889 Max Muller observed, "We cannot hope to fix a terminus a quo. Whether the Vedic hymns were composed in 1000 or 1500 or 2000 or 3000 years B.C., no power on earth will ever determine." It is pointed out that the supposition of 200 years for each of the different literary epochs in the origin of the Veda is purely literary and the view of Max Muller is not accepted these days.

(2) According to J. Hertel, the Rigveda originated, not in North-Western India but in Iran and at a time not far distant from that of Zoroaster who lived about 550 B.C.

(3) According to G. Husing, from about 1000 B.C. the Indians wandered from Armenia to Afghanistan which was the scene of the Rigvedic period. It is only later that they were driven further towards India. Acting upon the suggestions of H. Brunnhofer, Husing assumes that the King Kanita Prthusravas, whose mention is in the Rigveda, is identical with a Scythian King Kanitas, whose mention is in a Greek inscription and on a coin and who lived in the second century B.C. He comes to the conclusion that "the collection of these songs was not yet completed in the second century B.C.

(4) According to Prof. Jacobi, the Rigveda must have been written in the third millenary B.C. He arrives at this conclusion on the basis of astronomical calculations. The idea of taking the help

of astronomical data contained in the Indian literature for fixing the dates, is not a new one. Ludwig made such an attempt on the basis of the eclipses of the sun. The priests of ancient India who had to determine the times of sacrifices, were also the Almanac-makers. They had to study carefully the sky with a view to fix the times of sacrifices. No wonder, we come across a lot of astronomical information in the Brahmanas and the Sutas. The Nakshatras play a very important part. There are passages in the Vedic literature which state that a sacrificial act is to take place "under such and such Nakshatra", *i.e.*, when the moon stands in conjunction with this Nakshatra.

(5) According to another view, the conquest of the South by the Aryans must have taken place as early as seventh or eighth century B.C. as the Vedic Schools of Apastamba and Baudhayan are stated to have originated in Southern India. With the conquest of Southern India about 700 B.C., the assumption that the Indo-Aryans inhabited the northern corner of India and Eastern Afghanistan about 1200 or 1500 B.C. becomes impossible. It was not possible for the Aryans to conquer the whole of Northern India and also establish their states within five to eight hundred years. The Aryans were divided among themselves and they had to meet strong opposition from the original inhabitants and, therefore, their progress must have been very slow. According to Oldenberg, the period of 700 years is sufficient. "One should consider what 400 years have meant for the enormous plains of Northern and Southern America." Dr. Winternitz does not accept the view of Oldenberg and comes to the conclusion that at least double the period must have been required for that purpose.

(6) According to Bloomfield, out of about 40,000 lines of the Rigveda, about 5,000 lines are repetitions. This shows that at the time when the Rigveda was composed, there must have been in existence a large number of floating lines of verse which could be incorporated by any composer of the hymns of the Rigveda. The language of the hymns is much more archaic than that of the Vedic prose works. The Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads presupposed not only the hymns of the Rigveda but also the spells and prayers of the other Samhitas as sacred texts of ancient times. On linguistic, literary and cultural grounds, it is assumed that many centuries must have elapsed between the period of the earliest hymns and the final compilation of the hymns into a Samhita. The Brahmanas also required a period of several centuries for their origin. The Upanishads also belong to different periods of times and they also presuppose generations of teachers and a long tradition. In spite of this, it is to be observed that during the whole of the period of Vedic literature, the Aryans conquered only a small territory from the Indus to the Ganges. If it took the Aryans centuries to conquer this small region, they must have taken many more centuries to conquer the whole of Central and Southern India. Under the circumstances, the period of 700 years is not considered to be sufficient.

According to Oldenberg, centuries must have elapsed between the earliest Upanishads and the earliest Buddhist literature. Buddhist literature presupposes not only the Vedas, but also the Vedangas. When

Buddhism appeared in about 500 B.C., the whole of the Vedic literature was already in existence. On the basis of these facts, the beginning of the Vedic literature can be traced back to a period much earlier than that of 1000 B.C.

(7) The clay tablets found from the archives of Boghazkoi, the capital of the ancient Hittite Kingdom, throw some light on the age of the Rigveda. These discoveries were made by Hugo Wackler in Asia Minor in 1907. These tablets include records of treaties made between the King of the Hittites and the King of Mitani at the beginning of the 14th century B.C. These treaties mention some gods as their protectors. The names of these gods are Mitra, Varuna, Indra and Nasatyas. These names are evidently the same which are to be found in the Rigveda. It is concluded from above that the earliest of the Vedic hymns were composed "probably not later than about 1500 B.C." However, Oldenberg thinks that this discovery does not justify us in assuming greater antiquity for the Rigveda. He is of the opinion that "these are the gods of some western tribe akin to the Indians, inherited from some common past, as the Indians on their part had inherited them from the same source." However, Dr. Winternitz points out that the particular grouping of the gods Varuna and Mitra, Indra, and Nasatyas can be traced only in the Veda. Jacobi, Sten Konow and Hillebrandt also hold the opinion that the gods mentioned above are Indian Vedic deities and there is no possible justification for any other view.

(8) The famous letters from Tell el Amarna in which some Mitani princes are mentioned with names of Sanskrit form, belong to the period of the Boghazkoi inscriptions. Some princes of the Kassites who ruled over Babylonia between 1746 and 1180 B.C. had Sanskrit names like Shurias (Surya) and Marytas (Marutas). In the library of Assurbanipal of about 700 B.C. has been found a list of deities worshipped in Assyria. That list includes the name of Assaramazas whose equivalent is Ahuramazda in the Zenda-Avasta.

(9) According to Dr. Winternitz, efforts to determine the age of the Rigveda with the help of astronomy are bound to fail as many passages in the Veda can be given many interpretations. The astronomical calculations may be correct but the texts in question are not capable of a definite meaning. They can be interpreted variously and hence no definite conclusion can be arrived at on the basis of those texts. Vedic culture can be traced back at least to the second millenary B.C. The linguistic facts concerning the relationship between the Vedas and the Zend-Avasta and between the Vedic language and classical Sanskrit, do not give any positive results. They merely serve as a warning to refrain from dating the Vedas back to a very distant past on the strength of astronomical or geological speculations. To quote Winternitz, "We shall probably have to date the beginning of this development about 2000 or 2500 B.C., and the end of it between 750 and 500 B.C. The prudent course, however, is to steer clear of any fixed dates, and to guard against the extremes of a stupendously ancient period or a ludicrously modern epoch." (*A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. 1, p. 310).

**Social Condition.** The Rigveda points out to a highly organised



society. Monogamy was the general rule, but among the princes, polygamy was also practised. However, polyandry was absolutely unknown. The marriage was a sacred bond which could not be broken by any human action. However, widows were allowed to re-marry particularly when they were without a child, "for the Rigveda recognises in full the keen desire of the Vedic Indians for a child to perform his funeral rites." Dowry was usual at the time of marriage, but sometimes money had to be paid by a son-in-law to purchase his bride. The marriage of girls was not considered to be essential and there are references to girls remaining unmarried till late age and living with their fathers and brothers. After marriage, the bride was brought to the house of the bridegroom and in her new home, she was given a place of honour. She was to have authority over her aged father-in-law, mother-in-law and the brothers and sisters of her husband. The wife was the partner of the husband at the time of religious ceremonies and no ceremony was considered to be effective without her participation. Child marriage was unknown. The choice of the father counted in the selection of the bridegroom but the girl was also given a measure of independence in that matter. Women like Lopamudra, Visvavara, Sikata Nivavari and Ghosha were great scholars.

The father had complete control over his children. There is a reference to a father who blinded his son on the ground that the latter was a gambler. He had a hand in the marriage of his children. He was the head of the family and so long as he lived, he was the owner of his property. Individual ownership of moveable things such as cattle, horses and gold was recognised. The right of adoption was recognised. If the father had no son, the property could be inherited by a son of the daughter and not by the daughter herself.

The unit of social formation was the family which consisted of several members under a common head who was called the Kulapa. Many families were combined together and they constituted a Grama or village under a headman known as the Gramani.

There is a difference of opinion among scholars with regard to the existence or the non-existence of the caste-system in Rigvedic India. The Purusha Sukta which is to be found in the tenth Mandala of the Rigveda, refers to the four castes.<sup>1</sup> However, it is pointed

1. According to the Purusha-Sukta, the primeval giant Purusha was sacrificed and the Brahmanas were created from his head, the Kshatriyas from his breast or arms, the Vaishyas from his thighs and the Sudras from his feet. There was no rigid cast system in Rigvedic India. The term Varna in the Rigveda refers to the Brahmana, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya. As there was no rigidity of caste system, there were inter-marriages among the three castes and there were also changes of occupations. It is thus stated in one of hymns of the Rigveda: "I am a poet, my father is a doctor and my mother is a grinder of corn. With our different views, seeking after gain, we run, as after cattle."

It is pointed out that among the Dravidians, there existed a system of vocational castes and probably that influenced the caste system of the Aryans. In the Rigvedic period, the Brahmanas busied themselves in intellectual pursuits and priestly duties. The Kshatriyas took to fighting and the Vaishyas were busy in agriculture and industrial occupation. This division of society was not based on heredity. Agastya Rishi married Lopamudra, the daughter of the king of Vidarbha. Devayani, the daughter of Usanas-Shukra Rishi, was married to King Yayati. It is obvious that the rigidity in caste system which developed later on, did not exist in Rigvedic times.

out that the tenth Mandala is a later addition and does not belong to the period when most of the Rigveda was written. There was a distinction between the Aryans and the non-Aryans. The non-Aryans were called Dasis, Dasyus or Asuras. They are also referred to as Pishachas and Rakshasas who uttered fearful cries in the battle. The non-Aryans were also described as dark-skinned and noseless or snub-nosed. Their language was different from that of the Aryans. They did not perform the sacrifices like the Aryans. They did not worship the Vedic gods. They worshipped the Phallus which was condemned by the Aryans. They had their forts and the Aryans had to struggle very hard to subdue them. Their resistance was so great that the Aryans prayed to gods to help them. Indra was addressed in these words : "We are surrounded on all sides by Dasyu tribes. They do not perform sacrifices ; they do not believe in anything. Their rites are different ; they are no men. O destroyer of foes ! Kill them. Destroy the Dasa race."

As regards the dress of the people, the Rigvedic people had two or three kinds of garments, consisting of the under-garment (Nivi), a garment and an over-garment. Some people put on garments of various colours or those embroidered with gold. Ornaments such as necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets and anklets were used by both the sexes. Hair was combed and oil was also used. Women wore their hair plaited. Sometimes, men arranged their hair in the form of coils. A maiden arranged her hair in four plaits. There was the practice of growing beards but shaving was also known as there is a mention of razors being sharpened on stones. A barber was called Vapta.

Milk and its products were the most important part of the food of the Aryans. They also used a mess of gram cooked with milk. Cakes of rice or barley were mixed with ghee and then eaten. Porridge was prepared from Yava grain. Meat of goats and sheep which were sacrificed, was used. The cow was considered to be sacred and could not be killed (*Aghanya*). Soma and Sura were used but the use of Sura or liquor was condemned. The whole of the ninth Mandala of the Rigveda is devoted to the Soma drink.

The amusements of the people were chariot racing, horse racing, music, dancing and dicing. Dicing was done with stakes and consequently many families were ruined. Both men and women took part in dancing, which was accompanied by music from cymbals. The drum, Dundubhi, Karkari, lute, harp and the flute were used for music.

The Aryans of Rigvedic India were not nomads. They lived a settled life and built cottages of wood and thatch for their dwellings. Their cottages have been described in these words : "Columns are set up on firm ground, with supporting beams leaning obliquely against them, and connected by rafters on which long bamboo rods are laid, forming the high roof. Between the corner posts, other beams were set up according to the size of the house. The crevices in the walls were filled in with straw and reed, tied in bundles and the whole was to some extent covered with some

material. The various parts were fastened together with bars, pegs, ropes and thongs."

**Economic Condition.** The Rigvedic Aryans were essentially agriculturists and no wonder great importance was attached to *Krishi* or agriculture. Agriculture was carried on with the help of bulls and oxen. The ploughed land was called *Urvara* or *Kshetra*. The plough was drawn by oxen in team, of six, eight or twelve. The harvest was cut with the help of sickles. Lands were watered by artificial channels and ordinarily two crops a year were raised.

There were pastures for the grazing of cattle. There are references to herdsmen. The wealth of the people was known in terms of cattle, heroes or good sons. The grain grown was called *Yava* and *Dhanya*. Agricultural pests such as birds, locusts and insects are mentioned in the *Rigveda*. Too much of rain or too much of drought spoiled the crops. Water was got from wells, lakes and canals.

The Rigvedic Indians resorted to hunting for livelihood, sport and the protection of their flock from wild animals. Different methods were adopted to capture various kinds of animals.

Carpenter played an important part in Rigvedic society. It was his duty to make chariots for sport and fighting purposes and also to keep them in good repair. He was also to make carts. He had his *Parsu* or axe for his work. The tanner tanned the hides of the slaughtered animals and used leather for the purpose of making reins, bags, slings, bowstrings etc. There is also a mention of metal-workers, potters and smiths. Weaving was generally done by men. It is interesting to note that the father of a *Rishi* was a physician and his mother was the grinder of corn.

There was the system of barter in Rigvedic society. It is stated that the price of an image of *Indra* was ten cows. There was the practice of haggling in the market. The obligation of a contract was recognised as is clear from the following passage: "One sells a large quantity for a small price and then goes to the purchaser and denies the sale and asks for a higher price. But he cannot exceed the price once fixed on the plea that he has given a large quantity. Whether the price was adequate or inadequate, the price fixed at the time of sale must hold good." People contracted debts and paid interest on the same. Trade was carried on with other countries and naturally there must have been some system of exchange.

**Religious Condition.** The religion of the Rigvedic people was a simple one. They worshipped a large number of gods in the form of the phenomena of nature. They believed in terrestrial gods like *Prithvi*, *Soma* and *Agni*, atmospheric gods like *Indra*, *Vayu*, *Marutas*, and *Parjanya* and heavenly gods like *Varuna*, *Dyaus*, *Ashvin*, *Surya*, *Savitri*, *Mitra*, *Pushan* and *Vishnu*. *Varuna* is the god of sky and occupied a very high place of honour. A large number of hymns have been addressed to *Varuna*.

Next to Varuna, Indra, the god of Thunderstorm, was a favourite god of the Aryans. He was a thoroughly war-like god. The hymns refer to his battles with the Dasyus. Especially, the battle of Indra with Vritra is referred to in many hymns. Vritra was a demon in the form of a serpent or dragon who kept the waters enclosed or imprisoned in a mountain. Indra wanted to release the waters after giving battle to the demon and he actually killed him and thereafter released the waters which flowed in a rapid stream over the corpse of Vritra.

There is a reference to abstract deities such as Shraddha or faith and Manyu or wrath. There were minor deities like Gandharvas or aerial spirits, Ribhus or aerial elves and Apsaras or water-nymphs.

Some of the Rigvedic gods are referred to as animals. For example, Indra is referred to as a bull and the sun is referred to as a swift horse. However, it is pointed out that there was no animal worship in Rigvedic India.

The Rigvedic people offered prayers to the gods from whom they wanted favours or boons. Sacrifices were also performed for the same purpose and things like milk, grain, ghee, Soma and flesh were offered at the time of sacrifices. As an elaborate procedure was prescribed for the performance of sacrifices, various kinds of priests came into existence and those are referred to as the Hotri, Adhvaryu and Udagtri.

The Rigvedic people believed that gods and goddesses behaved like human beings. They ate and drank and had feelings and emotions like the ordinary human beings. Indra took the Soma and fought against Vritra, the demon of drought. Ushas was the daughter of the sky and was supposed to ride a shining car drawn by ruddy steeds. Some gods were big and the others were small. Indra and Varuna were considered to be the biggest deities.

The Aryans could not understand the power behind the natural phenomena and they tried to explain the realities in the universe with the help of myths. The forces of nature were deified and fictitious stories were told about them. It was in this way that mythology developed around the natural phenomena and supernatural personalities. According to Dr. Keith, "The objects of the devotion of the priests were the great phenomena of nature, conceived as alive and usually represented in anthropomorphic shape."

It is to be observed that Rigvedic religion did not put emphasis on the sadder aspects of life. It put emphasis on optimism. The Aryans were men of vigour and activity and they viewed life with hope and ambition.

Although there is a reference to a large number of Gods in the Rigveda, the unity of God was not ignored. This is clearly pointed out in the following hymn :—

"They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna,  
And Agni ; he is the heavenly bird Garutmat ;  
To what is one, the poets give many a name,  
They call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan,"



The people of the Rigveda had faith in life after death, in the world controlled by Yama.

According to Max Muller, "If therefore there must be a name for the religion of the Rigveda, polytheism would seem at first sight the most appropriate. Polytheism, however, has assumed with us a meaning which renders it totally inapplicable to the Vedic religion.

"Our ideas of polytheism being chiefly derived from Greece and Rome, we understand by it a certain more or less organised system of gods, different in power and rank, and all subordinate to a supreme God, a Zeus or Jupiter." (*Heritage of India*, p. 42).

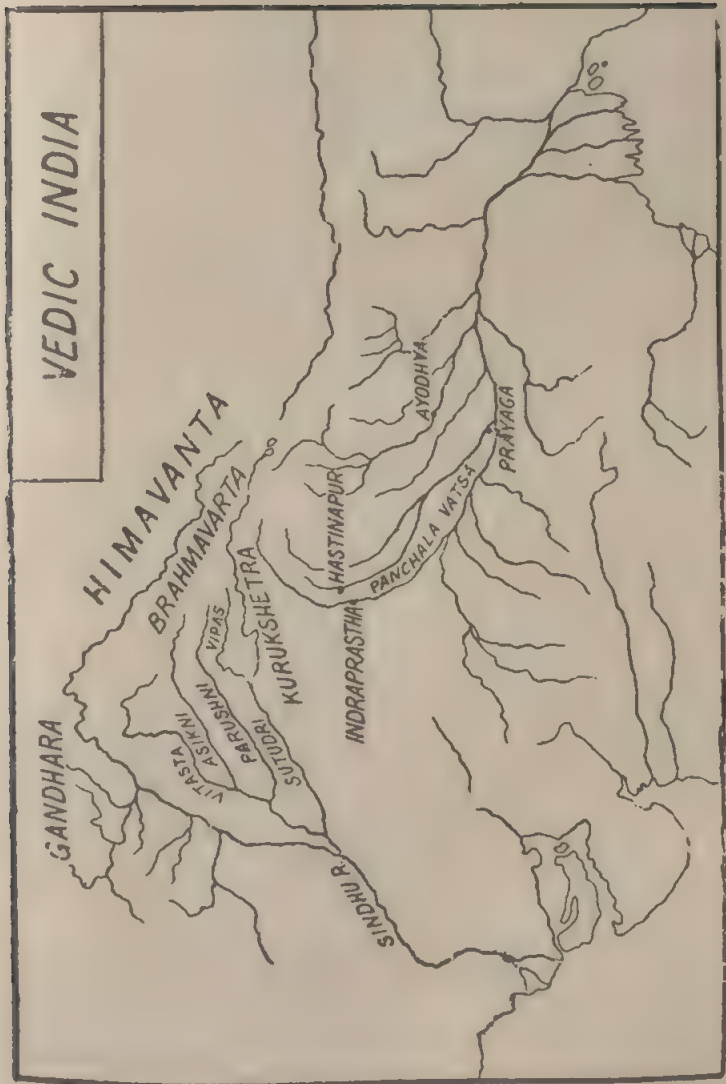
**Political Condition.** A study of the Rigveda shows that the Aryans were in possession of a large territory. The geographical details found in the Rigveda show that the Aryans knew the rivers Kubha or Kabul, Kurmu or Kurru, Gomti or Gomati, Suvastu or Swat, Sindh or Indus, Vitasta or Jhelum, Askini or Chenab, Parushni or Ravi, Vipasha or Beas, Shutudri or Sutlej, Saraswati, Yamuna and the Ganga. The seven rivers gave the name of Sapta Sindhavah to the region. There is also a reference to thunder, lightning, bursting of clouds and mountains.

Reference may be made to the tribes and kingdoms of Rigvedic India. The most important of them were the *Bharatas* after whom India has been named under the new Constitution. They were settled in the territory between the Saraswati and the Yamuna. They had to fight against their Aryan rivals on the west and the non-Aryan rivals in the east. The two important rulers of the Bharatas were Divodasa and Sudas. Divodasa had to fight against the Purus, Yadus and Turvasas. He was a patron of the Bharadwaj family of priests. Sudas is famous for his victory in the famous Battle of the Ten Kings.

The Purus were a powerful tribe and settled on both sides of the Saraswati. They were the rivals of the Bharatas. Their earliest kings were Durgaha and Girikshit. Purukutsa, the son of Girikshit, was a contemporary of Sudas and was killed in the battle of the Ten Kings.

It appears that the Krivis first of all lived on the Indus and the Chenab and later on migrated to Panchala. They were connected with the Kurus. The Srinjayas were the neighbours of the Bharatas and they occupied the territory of Panchala. The Anus, Druhyus, Yadus and Turvasas were the allies of the Purus against the Bharatas. They occupied various parts of the Punjab. Probably, the Matsyas occupied the territory now known as Jaipur and Alwar. They had a lot of wealth and consequently were attacked on many occasions. The Chedis lived between the Yamuna and the Vindhya. The Usinaras lived in the neighbourhood of Saraswati. The Dasas did not believe in the Aryan gods and worshipped the Phallus. They were non-Aryans and have been described as greedy like the wolf, extremely selfish, non-sacrificing, of cruel speech etc. They were notorious as cattle-lifters.

**Battle of the Ten Kings.** The Battle of the Ten Kings (Dasha Rajna), says Ragozin in "Vedic India", is told in the collections of



the Rigveda that bear the names of Viswamitra and Vasishta. The story of the campaign and the decisive battle can be reconstructed out of the detached passages and complete hymns which refer to the subject.

The main cause of the war was that Viswamitra who was a priest of Sudas for some time, left his court because the King gave preference to Vasishta with whom Viswamitra had enmity. In order to avenge himself, Viswamitra organised a confederacy against Sudas. Another cause of the war was that the extensive conquests of Sudas, his good luck and successes against his rivals, created jealousy and discontentment in the minds of those who were vanquished. When they found Viswamitra pitted against them, they threw in their lot with him to have their own revenge.

The names of both the enemies and allies are to be found in the Rigveda. According to Dr. R.K. Mookerjee, the whole of Rigvedic India, including the non-Aryan peoples, was involved in the war. The confederacy against Sudas consisted of 10 peoples. Five of them were to the west of the Indus and their names were the Alinas, the Pakthas, the Bhalanases, the Shivas and the Vishanins. The five people of the Interior were the Anus, the Druhyus, the Turvasas, the Yadus and the Purus. There were also three non-Aryan peoples and their names were the Ajas, Shigrus, and Yakshus. They were led by Bheda. Viswamitra led the confederacy against Sudas who was assisted by Vasishta.

The confederacy planned the campaign well and was sure of its success. Sudas "was surrounded" and he cried out for help to Indra who cut a way for him through the enemies in consideration of his prayers.

The two armies were separated by the Beas and Sutlej. The members of the confederacy intended to cross them. However, the Tritsus took the initiative and after crossing the Sutlej and the Beas, astonished the enemy. There was a veritable scramble. One after the other, the leaders of the confederacy and their followers jumped into the river, and many of them were drowned. There was a terrible slaughter and more than 6,000 warriors fell by "Indra's might." The booty that fell into the hands of Sudas was immense. The survivors had to pay a heavy tribute. According to Dr. Mookerjee, the victory of Sudas established his overlordship in Rigvedic India.

**Rigvedic Polity.** A critical study of the Rigveda Samhita gives an idea of the political system of the people. According to Dr. Mookerjee, the political evolution of Rigvedic India could be traced in the following ascending order: Griha or Kula or family, Gram or village, Vis or clan or Canton, Jana or the people and Rashtra or the country. The family was the unit of social organisation. It was under a head called Kulapa. Many families combined together to form a gram or village which was under a Gramani. Above the Gram was the Vis. However, it is difficult to state whether the Vis of the Rigveda was a local sub-division or a bloodkinship like a clan. Above the Vis was the Jana. There is a reference to Pancha Janah,

Yadava Janah and Bharata Janah. The King is referred to as the protector of the Jana or people (*Gupta Janasya*). The term *Rashtra* was used for the whole country.

According to Prof. Apte, sometimes *Vis*, *Jana* and even *Grama* are used almost synonymously. The relation between *Vis* and *Jana* is not quite clear. According to Dr. Raychaudhury, "In some Vedic passages, there is a clear contrast between the two, and Iranian analogies seem to suggest that the *Vis* is a subdivision of a *Jana*, if the latter may be taken as a parallel to the Iranian *Zantu*. It is also to be noted that the *Bharatas* are referred to as a single *Jana*, but when the word *Vis* is used in reference to them, we have the plural *Visah* probably pointing to the existence of a plurality of such units."

**Kingship.** According to Prof. Apte, as a general rule, monarchy was the system of government prevailing in the Rigvedic age. The term *Rajan* or King is frequently used in the Rigveda. However, we come across terms which in later times were undoubtedly applied to non-monarchical constitutions. We have reference to the *Gana* with the *Ganapati* at its head. It is not impossible that in the Rigvedic period there were the germs of republican states of the type found in the Buddhist times.

Vedic kingship was the natural outcome of the conditions surrounding the Aryans. The Rigveda refers to the sad plight of the people not choosing a king to lead them against the enemy. A king was the leader of the people in a war of aggression and also of defence. He is called the "Protector of the people" (*Gopa Janasya*) and a Sacker of Cities (*Puram Bhetta*). A study of the Rigveda shows that the king was no longer merely a leader of a primitive tribe, but occupied a position of pre-eminence among the people.

Hereditary kingship was the normal system but there is evidence to show that when the situation demanded, the people could select a worthy monarch of their own choice from among the members of the royal family or the nobility. According to Geldner, the selection was merely a formal affair, but even that shows that the people did count.

The protection of the people was the sacred duty of the king. In return, he expected and received loyal obedience from his subjects. The word *Bali* occurs several times in the Rigveda in the sense of a tribute or offering to a god. In the sense of a tribute to the king, it is met with in the compound *Bali-hrit* or "paying tribute." The tributes were probably received in kind from the subjects. They were both compulsory and voluntary. The king is described as "devouring the people." This is not to be understood in the sense of "oppression of the people", but rather as "living on them." The king was not the owner of the land. He was pre-eminently the warlord.

The king probably appointed a large number of priests to perform sacrifices and other sacred rites. There are references to spies who were probably engaged by him to get information about



the people. There is a reference to Dutas or messengers who were the means of communication between the different states. The king had, no doubt, other officers but we have no detailed knowledge of them.

The king performed the duties of judge, probably as a court of final appeal in civil cases. In criminal cases, he exercised a wider jurisdiction. He was himself above punishment (Adandya), but he wielded the rod of punishment (Danda) as the chief executive of the people. The marks of royalty were the pomp of dress, the possession of a palace and of retinue. There is mention of palaces with 1,000 pillars and 1,000 portals.

**Ministers.** The king had ministers and the foremost among them was the Purohita. His office was called Purohiti and Purodha. He was the sole associate of the king as his preceptor, guide, philosopher and friend. Examples of Purohita in the Rigveda are Viswamitra and Vasishta. Devapi was the Purohit of Santanu. The chief function of the Purohit was that of the domestic priest of the king. He was the alter-ego of the king in all religious matters. He also assumed leadership in political matters. He accompanied the king to the battlefield and strengthened him by his prayers for his safety and victory. According to Dr. Keith, "The Vedic Purohita was the forerunner of the Brahman statesmen who, from time to time in India, have shown conspicuous ability in the management of affairs, and there is no reason to doubt that a Viswamitra or Vasishta was a most powerful element of the government of the early Vedic Aryans."

The king's entourage also included the Senani, "leader of the army" and the Gramani, the leader of the village, for both civil and military purposes. There must have been many Gramanis in a kingdom, but the texts seem to contemplate only one as being in the royal entourage, possibly as a representative of rural interests and population. The king's personal following was also called Upasti (dependents) and Ibhya.

**Assemblies.** The king's autocracy was somewhat limited by the popular bodies called the Sabha and the Samiti, through which the will of the people expressed itself on important matters affecting their welfare, including the election of the king himself.

**Sabha.** The Sabha is mentioned in many passages of the Rigveda which, however, do not define its exact character and functions. It is used in the sense of an assembly as well as of the hall or meeting place for social intercourse and discussion of public matters like cows and dicing. A person "eminent in the Assembly" is called Sabha-Saha, "worthy of the Assembly" a Sabheya. There is mention of the Sabha being attended by persons of noble birth, Sujata and of "wealth worthy of the Sabha" (Ryih Sabhavan). These terms probably indicate that the Rigvedic Sabha was a Council of Elders or Nobles.

The Sabha was as important as the Samiti. It was described in the Atharvaveda as a sister of the Samiti, one of the two daughters of Prajapati.

According to Dr. Jayaswal, the Sabha was certainly related to the Samiti but its exact relationship is not deducible from the data available. Probably, it was a standing and stationary body of selected men working under the authority of the Samiti. The rise of the Sabha is to be dated in the latest period of the Rigveda. Its career was co-extensive with that of the Samiti. The Sabha definitely acted as the national judicature. It was called "Trouble" and "Vehemence". The 10th Mandala of the Rigveda describes the friends of one who had come back successful from the Sabha "joyful" and "delighted", and the man himself as "free from blame."

**Samiti.** The Samiti is also mentioned in many passages in the Rigveda without throwing light on its exact character. There is a reference to the king being a familiar figure in the Samiti and to his duty of attending it. One passage represents the king meeting the Samiti with power invincible and capturing their minds and their resolutions. Another emphasizes the fact that concord between the king and the Samiti was essential for the prosperity of the realm. There is a prayer for union of Mantra (Policy), minds (Manah), hearts (Chittam) and endeavour between the king and Assembly (Samiti).

According to Dr. K.P. Jayaswal, the Samiti was the national assembly of the whole people. The whole people were supposed to be present in the Assembly. The Rigveda says that the whole people or Samiti in the alternative elected and re-elected the Rajan or king.

The most important business of the Samiti was to elect the Rajan. It could also re-elect a king who was banished. It was a sovereign body from the constitutional point of view.

Dr. Jayaswal points out that references to the Samiti in the Rigveda are found only in portions which are considered to be the latest. It may be concluded from this that the Samiti was a product of the developed and not early Vedic age. It is correct to compare the Samiti with the early folk-assemblies of Western Europe.

The Samiti had a very long life. Its continuous existence is attested by the Rigveda and the Atharvaveda and by the Chhandogya Upanishad. It disappeared before the time of the Jatakas (600 B.C.).

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
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| Griswold, H.D.       | : Religion of the Rigveda.                         |
| Kalgi, A.            | : The Rigveda.                                     |
| Majumdar, R.C. (Ed.) | : The Vedic Age.                                   |
| Max Mueller          | : Heritage of India.                               |
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## CHAPTER VIII

### LATER VEDIC CIVILIZATION

The later Vedic civilization is to be found in the Samaveda Samhita, Yajurveda Samhita, Atharvaveda Samhita, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. The scattered passages at different places can be collected together and we can have an idea of the political, social, religious and economic conditions of the people of that period.

**Political Condition.** As regards their political condition, the Aryans seem to have moved on to the East and Kurukshetra became the scene of their activities. The old customs went into the background and new states emerged. The Kuru-Panchalas were the most prominent in the new age. They were considered to be the best representatives of Vedic culture, speakers of best Sanskrit, performers of sacrifices with perfection, having the best of the kings and the patrons of learning. It is stated that King Pravahana Jaivali of the Kuru-Panchalas attended daily the Panchala Parishad. This kingdom reached its height of glory and prosperity under Parikshit and Janamejaya. It enjoyed prosperity for a pretty long time and its important towns were Kampilya, Kausambi and Parichakra.

Kosala, Kasi and Videha are referred to as the seats of Vedic culture. On certain occasions, these three states joined together in a confederacy. It is stated that Para was the King of both Kosala and Videha. Jaia Jatukarnya is referred to as the Purohit of the three kingdoms of Kosala, Kasi and Videha. There are many stories of King Janaka and Yajnavalkya. Although King Janaka was a Kshatriya, he was famous for his knowledge of Brahma-Vidya. Yajnavalkya had instructions from King Janaka. A philosophical conference was summoned by King Janaka and was attended by great teachers like Uddalaka Aruni, Asvala, Artabhaga, Ushasta, Kohoda, Sakalya and Gargi. On that occasion, Yajnavalkya defeated all the philosophers and got a reward of 1,000 cows with their horns hung with gold coins.

The kingdom of Magadha and Anga were considered to be beyond the pale of Aryan civilization. There was a dislike for Magadha in the Rigveda and the same dislike was continued even during the period of the later Vedic civilization. This is abundantly proved by a reference in the Atharvaveda that evil things like fever should go to Magadha and Anga. Probably, that was due to the fact that Aryan civilization had not penetrated into that region. The people of Magadha were described as Vratyas in the Atharvaveda and regarded as outcastes and nomads.

As regards the system of administration during that period,

kingship was a normal feature of society. The *Atareva Brahmana* refers to the theory of kingship in these words : "The Devas and Asuras were fighting...The Asuras defeated the Devas...The Devas said : 'It is on account of our having no king that the Asuras conquered. Let us elect a king.' All consented."

The ideas of imperialism began to grow during this period. This is abundantly proved by terms such as *Adhiraj*, *Rajadhiraj*, *Samrat*, *Ekarat*, *Svarat*, *Virat* and *Sarvarat*. According to the *Atareva Brahmana*, *Ekarat* was the sole ruler of the territory up to the seas. According to the *Gopatha Brahmana*, a ruler became *Raja* by performing the *Rajsuya* sacrifice. The sacrifice of *Vajapeya* was to be performed by the *Samrat*, *Ashvamedha* by *Svarat*, *Purushamedha* by *Virat* and *Sarvamedha* by *Sarvarat*. The ideal set before the kings was "to win all victories, find all worlds, attain superiority, pre-eminence and supremacy over all kings, and achieve over-lordship, paramount rule, self-rule, sovereignty, supreme authority, kingship, great kingship and suzerainty, encompassing all, ruler of all territories, the sole single sovereign of the earth up to its limits in the ocean."

**Social Condition.** During this period, the caste system developed further. Different occupations were taken over by different castes. However, the system was not so rigid as it became later on in the *Sutra* period. At this time, it was midway between the laxity of the *Rigveda* and the rigidity of the *Sutras*. According to *Satapatha Brahmana*, marriages among relations of third and fourth degrees were prohibited. While the *Brahmanas* and *Kshatriyas* could marry women from the *Vaishyas* and the *Shudras*, the *Vaishyas* and the *Shudras* could not marry *Brahmana* and *Kshatriya* girls. Marriages were also allowed between the *Brahmanas* and the *Kshatriyas*. Thus *Brahmana Chyavana* married a *Kshatriya* girl called *Sukanya*. It was difficult to change one's caste but it was not absolutely impossible. *Viswamitra* was a *Kshatriya* but he is referred to as a *Rishi*. Many *Kshatriya* kings had *Brahmana* pupils. However, no *Vaishya* or *Shudra* was allowed to become a *Brahmana* or *Kshatriya* or even to take up the profession of teaching or fighting. The *Brahmanas* are referred to as the receivers of gifts, drinkers of *Soma* and persons who were always on the move. The *Kshatriyas* were required to fight. The *Vaishyas* had to pay tribute for the lands which they got from the *Kshatriya* nobles. They could be oppressed at will. The *Shudras* were the servants of the *Brahmanas*, *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas*. They could be expelled or killed at will.

We have some information regarding the system of education in those days. When a student was taken to a teacher, the ceremony of *Upanayana* had to be performed and as a result of that ceremony, the *Brahmchari* or the pupil became *Dvija* or twice-born. It was thought that the child got his physical body from his father and he was to get the spiritual body from his teacher. The student was required to live a very simple and hard life. He was to get up early in the morning when the stars were still in the sky. He was then to take his bath and chant the *Mantras* from the *Vedas*. He was required to put on the skin of a black antelope, girdle of *Kusha* grass and



also allow the hairs to grow long. He had to collect fuel for the morning and evening sacrificial fire. He was also required to do the begging for his teacher. No fixed period was prescribed at which the students started their education. Likewise, there was no fixed period during which the students were required to live with "their teachers for studies. Ordinarily, the period of study was 12 years but it could be 32 years or more."

In addition to the schools run by the individual teachers, there were Charakas or wandering teachers. Their duty was to go about from one part of the country to another, and spread knowledge among the people. Wherever they went, they were surrounded by people who were eager to learn from them. Uddalaka Aruni was one of such Charakas. There is also a reference to the Panchala Parishad or the Academy of Kuru Panchala which was patronised and attended daily by its ruler. In addition to the above, conferences of learned persons were summoned from time to time and all the learned men and women of the age were assembled on that occasion to discuss important questions. Reference to such a conference summoned by King Janaka has already been made above.

It is to be observed that women like Gargi and Maitreyi were considered to be highly advanced intellectually. Gargi was one of the learned persons summoned by King Janaka to attend the conference convened by him. The Upanishads refer to the conversation between Maitreyi and her husband, Yajnavalkya. It is also to be noticed that learning was not the monopoly of the Brahmanas alone. The Kshatriyas were also learned persons. Reference is made to King Janaka of Videha, King Pravahana Jaivali of Kuru Panchala, King Ashvapati of Kaikeya, King Pratardana, King Brihadratha, King Ajatasatru, King Janashruti Pautrayana etc. who were famous for their learning.

As was natural under the circumstances, most of the teaching was done orally and the students were required to learn up everything by heart. No wonder, prayers were offered to the gods for the grant of memory. One such prayer was in these words :—

"May the Lord endow me Mehda ;

May we learn much and learn by the ear

And may we retain what we have thus learnt".

Purity of speech was considered to be a sign of culture, and great attention was devoted to its cultivation.

Reference is made to the subjects of study of that period and those included the four Vedas, Itihasa and Purana, grammar, logic, ethics, Deva-Vidya, Kshatra-Vidya, Sarp-Vidya, Brahma-Vidya, Nakshtra-Vidya, Bhuta-Vidya etc.

Various Kulas and Gotras devoted themselves to the task of preserving and propagating the sacred texts of the Vedas in different parts of the country. Teachers and students came into contact with one another in the Śakhas and Charanas. The students of the Vedas who studied the same text belonged to one Sakha and there were

many Sakhas of the various Vedas. Each Chattriya had its own arrangement of the Vedic text, the rules of conduct and discipline and the various ceremonies and rituals.

A lot of emphasis was put on spiritual knowledge in the Upanishads. Sacrifices were put into the background and those who performed them were dubbed as fools. According to the Katha Upanishad, "Not by the Veda is the Atman attained, nor by intellect, nor by much knowledge of books." According to the Aitareya Aranyaka, "To what end shall we repeat the Veda, to what end shall we sacrifice? For we sacrifice breath in speech or in breath speech". The highest knowledge was considered to be the knowledge of Atman. According to Brahminaranyaka, "Brahminas seek to know Him by the study of Veda, by sacrifice, by gifts, by penance, by fasting and he who knows Him becomes a Muni. Wishing for that world only, mendicants leave their homes. Knowing this, the people of old did not wish for offspring and they, having risen from the desire for sons, wealth and new worlds, wander about as mendicants". It is pointed out that King Janasruti brought a present of 600 cows, a necklace and a carriage with mules to Raikva but the reply of Raikva was in these words: "Fie, necklace and carriage be thine, O, Sudra, together with cows".

It is true that there were some gifted ladies during this period and some of them are referred to as Brahnavadinis, but on the whole their condition changed for the worse. They lost the right to the Upanaim ceremony. There was no recitation of the Vedic hymns at the time of their Samskaras. There was monogamy for the poor people but polygamy for the princes and the rich classes. There appears to be a reference to polyandry in the following hymn of the Atharvaveda :—

Even though there were ten non-Brahmana  
previous husbands of a woman.

The Brahmana alone becomes her husband  
if he seizes her hand.

According to the Satapatha Brahmana, the wife was one-half of her husband and she alone completed him. However, in actual practice, there was a decline in her status and dignity. Many of the religious ceremonies which were formerly left to the wife, were now performed by the priests and she was not allowed to attend political assemblies. An ideal wife was considered to be one who was submissive, did not talk at all and took her meals after her husband. The birth of a daughter was considered to be the most unhappy occasion. She was considered to be a source of misery while a son was regarded as the saviour of the family. Women were taught to sing and dance and many kinds of musical instruments such as drums, flutes, lyre, cymbals were employed for that purpose.

**Religious Condition.** During the period of the Brahmanas, the number of sacrifices multiplied. There is a reference to seven kinds of priests in the Rigveda but their number was increased to 17. The various priests had their assistants. A lot of emphasis was put on symbolism. In the Brahmanas, "the sacrifice is conceived as con-

stantly recurring in order to maintain the universe. The symbolism was originally suggested by the Purusha hymn of the Rigveda presenting the conception of the creation of the universe from the Virat Purusha. In the Brahmanas, Prajapati stands for Purusha and "the sacrifice is conceived as constantly recurring in order to maintain the universe. To render this possible is the end of the fire-altar, the building of which is the reconstruction of the universe in the shape of Prajapati. Prajapati, again, is identified with Agni, the fire of the altar, and both Prajapati and Agni are the divine counterparts of the human sacrifice. But Prajapati is himself Time, and Time in the long run is Death, so that the sacrificer himself becomes Death and by that act rises superior to Death, and is for ever removed from the world of illusion and trouble to the world of everlasting bliss. In this the true nature of Prajapati and of the sacrificer is revealed as Intelligence and the Satapatha Brahmana urges the seeker for truth to meditate upon the Self, made up of intelligence and endowed with a body of spirit, a form of light and an ethereal nature".

During this period, Rudra and Vishnu came into prominence. Rudra took the place of Prajapati. Vishnu was identified with sacrifices.

**Economic Condition.** Agriculture was still the main occupation of the people and agricultural operations consisted of ploughing, sowing, reaping and thrashing. Cow-dung was used as manure. Grains like rice, barley, beans, sesamum etc. were grown during the various parts of the year. As before, there were ordinarily two harvests in a year.

There is a reference to a large number of occupations such as those of washermen, butchers, barbers, fishermen, ploughmen, charioteers, makers of baskets, ropes, etc. People were experts in the making of fire-altars. There are references to Shreshthi or merchant. Women are referred to as basket-makers, dyers, embroiders etc. The metals used by the people at that time were gold, bronze, iron, copper, lead, tin etc. Gold was secured from many sources. Elephants were domesticated by the people.

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                      |                                       |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
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| Majumdar, R.C. (Ed.) | : The Vedic Age.                      |
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| Winternitz           | : History of Sanskrit Literature.     |

## CHAPTER IX

### AGE OF THE SUTRAS

The Sutras were manuals of instruction in a brief but definite language. They were easy for memory. The Sutra literature contained the Vedangas, Nirukta of Yaska, Ashtadhyayi of Panini, Srouta Sutras, the Grihya Sutras, and the Dharmam Sutras. As regards the six Vedangas, they included Kaipa, Siksha, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Chhandas and Iyotisha. The Ashtadhyayi of Panini is a book on Sanskrit grammar. The Srouta Sutras deal with a large number of ceremonies which were performed by priests. The Grihya Sutras deal with domestic sacrifices and rites to be performed by the householders. The Dharma Sutras refer to customary law and practice. The Dharma Sutras are assigned to the period between 7th century B.C. and 2nd century B.C. and their authorship is ascribed to Gautama, Baudhavana, Apastamba and Vasishtha. According to Goldstucker and Sir R.G. Bhandarkar, the Ashtadhyayi of Panini was written in about 700 B.C. However, according to Macdonell, "The date of Panini is usually assumed to be about 350 B.C. but the evidence for this is very doubtful, it is perhaps safer to say that he lived after, probably soon after, 500 B.C."

**Panini's Grammar.** By collecting the scattered references in Panini's grammar, we have some idea of the India of his times. Panini refers to the regions of Kalinga, Sind, Taxila, Cutch and the Swat Valley. He also refers to 22 Janapadas or states such as Gandhara, Avanti, Kamboja, Kuru, Madra, Kosala, Utsara, Vriji, Magadha etc. He refers what he calls Prachya Janapadas. The Janapadas were ruled by the Kshatriya kings who were called by the name of Janapadin. The people who belonged to the same Janapada were known as Sajanapadah. Every Janapada had its own well-defined boundary. The administrative units in Janapada were Vishaya, Nagara and Grama. The head of the village was called Gramani.

The literature referred to by Panini is the Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, the Brahmanas, Chhandas, Kalpasutras, Vyakhyana, Gatha, Katha and the Mahabharata. A student was called a Chhatra because he was protected by the teacher who was himself known as Adhyapaka. The students of the same teacher were called Sabrahmacharinas. Girls were also admitted to the Charnas. There are references to separate hostels for girls. There is also a reference to Parishadas whose decisions on the interpretation of the Vedic texts were binding.

It appears that the people had made a great advance in their economic condition. Reference is made to a large number of



professions followed by the people. Persons in the service of the state were known as Yuktas and Adhyakshas. Labourers were employed on wages which were paid in cash or in kind. There is a reference to the profession of money-lending and interest at the rate of ten per cent was allowed to be charged. Reference is made to the method of ploughing and sowing. The names of the crops were given after the names of the month in which they were sown. The names of the fields were given after the name of the crops grown on them. There is a reference to the picking up of grains from the fields by the ascetics.

Reference is made to the arts of weaving and dyeing. The potter is referred to as Kulala. Various kinds of music was in vogue. There is a reference to dancers and vocalists. There are also references to the guilds of the various crafts. Distilleries and breweries are also mentioned and excise was a source of revenue of the state. Khari, Patra, Vista, Satamana, Adhaka, Achita, Purusha, Dishta etc. are mentioned as various kinds of weights and measures. Coins such as Karshapana, Nishka, Pana, Pada, Masha etc. are also mentioned.

In various passages, there are references to Kula, Vamsa, Gotra, Charana and Samgha. Kula is the name for family. If a Kula was continued for long, it became a Vamsa. Persons belonged to the same Gotra if they had a common ancestor and the important Gotras were the Angiras, Atri and Bhrigu. There were two kinds of Samghas and those were Gana and Nikaya. The Gana was a political assembly and the Nikaya was a religious association. A Samgha was governed by the Kshatriyas. There were parties known as Vargas and there was rivalry among them for power. A democratic procedure was followed in the administration of the Samgha. Reference is also made to the Parishat or Council of the King.

**The Grihya Sutras.** The Grihya Sutras deal with the domestic lives of the people. Reference is made to the duties of the people from their birth to their death. People are required to perform a large number of Samskaras which begin long before the actual birth of the child. It was binding upon the persons to perform those duties.

Reference is made to eight kinds of marriages: Brahma marriage, Prajapatya marriage, Arsha marriage, Daiva marriage, Gandharva marriage, Asura marriage, Rakshas marriage and Paisacha marriage. The first four kinds of marriages were approved by the Grihya Sutras, but that was not the case with the rest of the four.

Pancha Mahayajnas were required to be performed by every householder and those were known as Brahma Yajna, Pitri Yajna, Deva Yajna, Bhuta Yajna and Atithi Yajna. In addition to the above, the householders had to perform seven more Pakayajnas at certain definite intervals.

The social system was based on the Varnashrama Dharma.

Great emphasis was put on the purity of castes by means of restrictions on marriages and inter-dining. The earlier Sutras were not so strict but as time went on passing, the restrictions became very rigid.

The four castes were required to perform certain duties. As regards the Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, they were all required to study, make sacrifices and give charity. The Brahmanas particularly were required to do the work of teaching, performing sacrifices and the receiving of gifts. The Kshatriyas were required to protect all others, run the administration on right lines, support the learned Brahmanas, non-Brahmana ascetics and all others who were in distress. The Vaishyas were required to cultivate land, carry on trade and domesticate animals. The Shudras were required to be humble and serve all the higher castes. It is to be observed that the condition of the Shudras was not so bad as that of the serfs in Europe. It was the duty of his master to support him even when he was disabled and could not perform any duties. Shudras were allowed to utter the Namaskara Mantra and perform the Pakayajna sacrifices.

The names of the four Ashramas were Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprastha and Sanyas. It was the duty of the Brahmachari to live a hard life and acquire education. As a householder, he was to perform all those duties which were enjoined on him by law. As a Bhikshu or Vanaprasthi, he had to leave his house and live a life of contentment and devotion to God. As a Sanyasi, he was to live in the forests and subsist on the roots and fruits of the jungles. He had also to practise penance and contentment.

**The Dharam Sutras.** There is no unanimity of opinion among all the writers of the Dharam Sutras. They differ from one another on many points. Gautama, Baudhayana and Vasishtha approve of Niyoga but the same is condemned by Apastamba. While Gautama and Baudhayana refer to eight kinds of marriages, Apastamba refers to only six and omits altogether the Paisacha and Prajapatya marriages. Baudhayana says that the eldest son should be given a greater share than others, but this view is not accepted by Apastamba. Apastamba does not allow the ceremony of Upanayana to a charioteer but Baudhayana allows the same. Gautama allows usury to a Brahman if it is done through an agent, but Apastamba condemns it and says that nobody should eat at the house of a Brahman who is a usurer. According to Baudhayana, usury is like Brahmahatya and a Brahman who practises it becomes a Shudra. According to Buhler, "These rules which thus allow Brahmanas to be gentlemen-farmers and sleeping partners in mercantile or banking firms managed by Vaishyas do not occur in other Smritis."

According to the Dharam Sutras, the sovereign was not the source of law but merely the upholder of law. To quote Gautama, "The administration of justice shall be regulated by the Veda, the Dharam Sastras, the Vedangas, the Puranas and the Upvedas." Again, "The king must protect the castes and different stages of life. Authoritative in the realm shall be all laws of castes and clans as

well as the laws of regions not opposed to Vedic tradition, while, for their respective orders, ploughmen, traders, herdsmen, money-lenders and artisans may make their own laws." According to Vasishta, "The king's duty is to pay attention to the special laws of religions, castes and clans and keep the four orders to their prescribed duty". The various guilds were allowed to frame their own laws.

According to Gautama, the king was entitled to take as tax one-tenth, one-eighth or one-sixth of the produce and one day's work per month from artisans. He could also charge one-twentieth on merchandise, one-fifteenth on cattle and gold and one-sixtieth on flowers, herbs, honey, meat, grains, fruits etc. The right of inheritance was given to the Sapindas. Widows were not given the right to inherit. A daughter could inherit only if there was no son, pupil or teacher of the deceased. Women were not allowed to offer sacrifices. They were considered to be as property.

Reference is made to three kinds of important crimes and those were assault, adultery and theft. The punishments awarded to persons belonging to the various castes varied. If a Kshatriya abused a Brahman, he was fined 100 coins. If a Vaishya abused a Brahman, he was fined 150 coins. If a Brahman abused a Kshatriya, he was fined 50 coins. If he abused a Vaishya, he was fined 25 coins. If he abused a Shudra, he was not fined at all. Interest at the rate of 15 per cent was allowed.

The Dharam Sutras preferred the life of villages and condemned the life of cities. According to Baudhayan, "It is impossible for one to attain salvation who lives in a town covered with dust." No wonder, good people were asked to avoid going into the towns. The Mantras were not to be recited in the towns at any time. However, there are some references to the building of towns by certain kings and the establishment of their palaces, assembly-halls etc. The people were not allowed to go to foreign countries. A taboo was put on sea voyages.

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
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## CHAPTER X

### THE EPIC AGE

The great Epics of the Aryans were the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Ramayana is the oldest and most popular Epic of the Hindus and consists of seven books and 2,400 couplets. According to popular belief, it was written by Valmiki Rishi. The Mahabharata consists of 18 books and about one lakh of couplets. It is generally believed that it was written by Vyas but according to Hopkins, it was written not by one person nor even by one generation, but by many. It is primarily the story of a great historic event told by "the glorifier of kings, the domestic priest and the bard who are often one." The Epics are the Vedas of the masses who "turn in sorrow, in joy and in daily toil to these noble poems for solace and inspiration." The Epics are the source of a large number of works in Sanskrit and in modern Indian languages. The characters mentioned in them have become legendary heroes and some of them are actually worshipped as the various incarnations of God Himself. These have become national Epics and many festivals are held in every nook and corner of India to commemorate the memory of the heroes of the Epics. In their music, dance, poetry, drama, sculpture etc. the people derive their inspiration from the Epics.

According to some writers, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata contain very little of history. The view of Jacobi and Macdonnell is that the Epics are based on mythology and their heroes and heroines are not historical figures. Rama stands for Indra, the god of rain and thunder who fought against Vritra or Ravana. The war between Rama and Ravana is compared to the struggle between Indra and Vritra. The Ramayana is also described as an allegorical expression of the Aryan expansion in the South. According to V.A. Smith, "The poem (The Ramayana) seems to me to be essentially a work of imagination probably founded on vague traditions of the Kingdom of Kosala and its capital Ayodhya". However, such a view cannot be accepted. There is a possibility of certain additions by later writers and also of some contribution by the imagination of poets, but the main actors in the Epics are undoubtedly historical figures.

According to the orthodox Hindus, the Ramayana belongs to the Treta Yuga and the Mahabharata belongs to the Dvapara Yuga. However, this view is not accepted by the modern historians. According to them, the Epic period came after the Vedic period and before the Buddhist period. The Epics belong to the same age as that of the Sutras. According to Pargiter, the Mahabharata war was fought about 950 B.C. Dr. Winternitz was of the opinion that the Ramayana in the present form was composed



by Valmiki in the third century B.C. on the basis of ancient ballets. According to some writers, the composition of the Mahabharata does not appear to be earlier than the fourth century B.C. and not later than the fourth century A.D. According to Dr. R.K. Mookerjee, the geographical horizon of the Ramayana shows that it is much older than the Mahabharata. It does not go beyond the Vindhya. However, in the case of the Mahabharata, the whole of India was known and the rulers from the South also came to participate in the Mahabharata war. Panini mentions Vasudeva, Arjuna and Yudhishtira. The Pandavas are not known to the Brahmanas. The Mahabharata in the present form seems to have been well-known in the time of Patanjali's Mahabhashya in the second century B.C.

**The Ramayana.** The theme of the Ramayana is the conflict between Rama and Ravana who can be taken to be the representatives of the Aryan and non-Aryan civilisations. The conflict ended in the victory of the Aryans over the non-Aryans. Ravana is described as a devotee of Shiva and consequently possessed super-human powers. Rama also was the incarnation of Vishnu. Vasishta and Viswamitra also helped the cause of the Aryans.

According to the story of the Ramayana, King Dasratha ruled at Ayodhya which was the capital of Kosala. He had three wives and four sons. When he became old, he wanted to leave his kingdom and consequently appointed his eldest son Rama as the Yuvraja. The youngest queen, Kaikayai, wanted her own son, Bharata, to be the ruler of Ayodhya and consequently got two promises from Dasratha by which Rama was to be exiled and Bharata was to be made the ruler. Rama was a dutiful son and he decided to carry out the promises of his father. Consequently, he left for the jungles accompanied by Sita, his wife, and Lakshmana, his younger brother. As soon as Rama left Ayodhya, Dasratha died. Bharata refused to accept the throne and tried to persuade Rama to return but the latter refused to do so.

While Rama was in exile, Sita was stolen away by Ravana, the King of Ceylon or Lanka. Sita refused to marry Ravana and consequently was put in prison. Rama and Lakshmana, with the help of Sugriva and Hanumana and their forces, invaded Ceylon. Ravana was defeated and killed and Sita was recovered. When the fourteen years' period of exile was over, Rama went back to Ayodhya and became its ruler. Sita was turned out by Rama as there was some criticism against her. While she was in jungles, she gave birth to two sons, Lava and Kush, who were looked after by Valmiki. These children became expert archers. When Rama wanted to perform horse sacrifice, they challenged his armies and ultimately were united with their father.

**The Mahabharata.** Unlike the Ramayana which is described as a conflict between the Aryans and the non-Aryans, the Mahabharata describes a conflict among the Aryans themselves. The Mahabharata War of Kurukshetra affected all the Aryan kings of India who were ranged either on one side or the other. The Pandvas

had their allies from Kashi, Kosala, Magadha, Matsya, Chedi and the Yadus of Mathura. The allies of the Kurus were the Yavanas, Sakas, Madras, Kambojas, Kaikeyas, Sindhus, Sanviras, the Bhojas, the Andhras, the rulers of Mahismati, Avanti and Pragjyotish.

According to the story of the Mahabharata, the territory between the Ganga and Yamuna was governed by a powerful Aryan tribe known as the Bharatas. One of its rulers was Pandu who had five sons. After his death, his blind brother, Dhritrashtra, succeeded to the throne. He was kind to his nephews and gave them very good education. The sons of Dhritrashtra, known as the Kauravas, became jealous of the ability and popularity of their cousins and Duryodhana conspired and managed to bring about the banishment of the Pandvas. The Pandva brothers moved from place to place to make their fortune and ultimately reached the Panchala-Deshha where the Swyamvara of princess Draupadi was being held. Arjuna, one of the Pandvas, fulfilled the conditions of the Swayamvara and married Draupadi. With the help of the King of Panchala, the Pandvas were able to recover a portion of their old kingdom and founded a new capital, Indraprastha, near Delhi. Even this much was not liked by Duryodhana who began to plan the complete ruin of the Pandvas. A game of dice was arranged and Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandvas, was invited to play with the Kaurvas. In the game, Yudhishtira lost everything, even his kingdom and Draupadi. The Pandvas were exiled. They spent 13 years in jungles and had to undergo great hardships. However, they were determined to get back their kingdom. They went over to Lord Krishna, the ruler of the Yadavas, and Virat, the King of Matsya. Lord Krishna tried to persuade Duryodhana to give the Pandvas their due share but he was unsuccessful in his mission. Under the circumstances, war became inevitable. The armies of the Pandvas and Kaurvas assembled at Kurukshetra. It is said that when Arjuna saw his own relatives on the opposite side, he hesitated to fight. On that occasion, Lord Krishna gave him the divine message which is found in the Bhagvad Gita or the Song Celestial. The hesitation of Arjuna was overcome and a bloody battle was fought for 18 days. All the Kaurvas were destroyed. Millions of people lost their lives. After their victory, the Pandvas performed the horse-sacrifice and Yudhishtira ascended the throne of Hastinapur. After some time, all the Pandva brothers put Parikshat on the throne and retired to the Himalayas.

*Historical Value of the Epics.* The Ramayana illustrates the story of the Aryanisation of the country. The Rakshasas who disturbed the sacrifices of Viswamitra were probably the non-Aryans who did not like the expansion of the Aryans. Sugriva and Bali, the Vanara kings, were non-Aryans who ruled in the Deccan. By the time of the Mahabharata, the whole of the Deccan was Aryanised.

*Social Condition.* In the time of the Epics, in addition to the four traditional castes, many other castes came into existence. That was partly due to the inter-marriages between the different castes. The institution of marriage lost its old sanctity. Polygamy and

polyandry were both practised. Dasratha had three wives. Ravana also had many wives. It is pointed out that Draupadi married the five Pandvas. A man was not allowed to marry a wife from a higher caste although he could marry a woman from the lower caste. Later on, even that was disallowed. The Shudras occupied a very low position and were punished if they practised penance and austerities. The practice of Niyoga was in vogue. There is no reference to widow re-marriage although early marriages started towards the end of the Epic age. Women were not allowed much freedom in the matter of their marriages. However, the system of Swayamvara for the royal families existed. This is clear from the Swayamvara of Sita and Draupadi. It is pointed out that maidens were exhibited for sale and given to the highest bidders. Kaikeyi and Madri were secured by giving large presents. Rakshas marriage was another name for abduction and the abductor was allowed to keep the girl if he could defeat her relatives.

The position of women was better at the beginning but there was a decline towards the end. Draupadi is called a Brahmavadini and she questioned the right of Yudhisthira to give her away in gamble. It appears that the system of Purdah had begun. The system of Sati existed in the Punjab as Madri burnt herself on the funeral pyre of her husband.

Great sanctity was attached to cows and vegetarianism became popular. At the beginning of the Epic period, the clothes of people were simple ones. There was very little of tailoring. The dress of a man consisted of two oblong pieces of cloth, one of which was tied round the loins and the other round the body. When men appeared in public, they tied their turbans. Young people used coloured turbans and the old ones white turbans. The dress of women consisted of two oblong pieces of cloth. The lower piece of cloth was like a Sari and the Uttariya cloth was used for covering the head. Widows covered their heads with white cloth and married women used coloured cloth. Women put coloured powder on their heads. Ordinarily, cotton clothes were used by the people but occasionally, silken clothes were also used. The Kshatriyas kept long hair but the Brahmanas shaved their heads and their chins. However, the Sikha was kept by both. People liked ornaments of gold and silver. They seem to have been great lovers of athletics. Lord Krishna, Balram and Bhima were great athletes. People also took delight in witnessing the fights of the elephants. Fights with maces also seem to have been popular.

The rich were addicted to gambling and drinking. Prostitution was a recognised institution and women of bad character were common in those days. Kings and rich people kept concubines.

Sanskrit was the spoken language of the people but Prakrit was also making a beginning. People studied philosophy and rhetorics. Music and dancing were considered to be the qualifications for young girls.

Astronomy had made great progress in the country. The people had knowledge of the twelve Rashis. They had knowledge



of the movements of the moon among the 27 Nakshatras. All astrological considerations were based upon the conjunction of the moon with Nakshatras. Their month began with the rising moon.

*Economic Condition.* Agriculture and the breeding of cattle were still the main occupations of the people. The help of irrigation was taken to add to the fertility of the soil. The sciences of agriculture and cattle-breeding were especially studied by the people. The merchants were organised in guilds which were controlled by the Mahajanas. Although village or Grama was a popular unit of economic life, there are references to the towns or Nagaras in the Epics. Each Nagara had a large number of guilds which managed their own affairs and the king ordinarily did not interfere with their internal affairs. While the former paid taxes in kind, the Nagaras had to pay in cash. Internal and external trade flourished. Money was used as standard of value although exchange by barter was also practised.

Ordinarily, cotton cloth was manufactured by the people. However, sometimes silk and woollen cloth was also manufactured. The people knew the arts of inter-lacing and dyeing. Fast colours were produced. Minerals were excavated and worked upon by artisans. India produced a large quantity of gold, pearls and precious stones.

*Religious Condition.* Important changes took place in the religious field in the time of the Epics. The Vedic gods were superseded by Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Indra, Surya and Varuna were relegated to the background. Gods and goddesses like Ganesh and Parvati became popular. The Avtara or the doctrine of various incarnations of Vishnu became popular. Rama and Krishna came to be worshipped as the incarnations of Vishnu. The Bhagwad Gita is one of the most popular religious books of the Hindus. It gives the philosophy of Karma. According to Prof. S.R. Sharma, "The Brahmanas and the Arya Samajists read it, quote it and comment upon it, as often and as admiringly as the Sanatanists and Vedantists. It receives the same homage from the Ramanujis, the Vallabhacharis and the Vaishnavas as from the Nanakpanthis, Dadupanthis and the Gulabdasis. All the different classes of Sanyasis and Sadhus whose number is legion, read it, revere and quote it in support of their conflicting dogma and contradictory doctrines and with equal confidence. There are vast numbers who have treasured it in their memories and repeat the whole every morning or even twice a day." (*Our Heritage*, pp. 64-65).

*Political Condition.* During the period of the Epics, there were a large number of states in India. The ordinary form of government was kingship but there were also republics. The king was not an autocrat. He was required to rule according to the principles of justice and morality. The people had the right to depose a wicked king. If a king in any way injured his subjects, the latter were allowed to kill him "like a mad dog." The Mahabharata says that "the gods do not approve of a defective king" and he was liable to lose his throne. The king was required to consult the people on certain occasions. We are told that Dasratha consulted the people on the question of the



appointment of Rama as Yuvraja. When both Rama and Bharata were away, the people suggested the election of another king. It was the duty of the king to respect the laws of the Pugas or village communities, Srenis or guilds, Jatis or castes, Kulas or clans and Janapadas or regions.

As regards the Republics, there were two kinds of them. There were individual republics and confederations of republics. The name for an individual republic was Gana and the name for a confederation of republics was Samghata-gana. The greatest difficulty in the way of the successful working of a Gana was the lack of unity and every precaution had to be taken to avoid internal dissensions. The same difficulty was found in the case of confederations of republics. We are told that the republics of Yadvas, Kukuras, Bhojas, Andhakas and Vrishnis formed themselves into a confederation or Samgha and Lord Krishna was chosen as its President or Samgha-Mukhya. The heads of the various units of the confederation were called Ishvara. It is stated that there was going on a rivalry among the party-leaders and Lord Krishna complained about the same. However, Narada asked Krishna to keep the confederation strong by removing the internal dissensions.

Reference is made to the various kinds of nobles in the state and those were the Mantrins or the members of the Cabinet, Amatyaas, Sachivas, Parishadas, Sahayas, Dharmikas, Arthakarins etc. The various heads of the departments of the state were known as the Mantri, Purohita, Chamupati, Dvarapala, Karagaradhihari, Dravyasamchyakrit, Yuvraja, Pradeshta, Nagaradhyaksha, Karyanirmanakrit, Durgapala, Atvipalaka, Rashtrantpalaka, Sabhadhyaksha and Dandapala.

The Grama or village was the unit of administration. It was under a Gramani or headman. Above the Gramani was Dasagrami, Pimsatipa and Satagrami or Gramasatadhyaksha. These officers were in charge of 10, 20 and 100 villages. Adhipati was in charge of 1,000 villages. The money was collected by the different agencies but ultimately it was sent to the king.

The state recognised the private ownership of land in the country and contented itself by claiming only one-sixth of the produce as land-revenue. The mines were considered to be the property of the state and were worked departmentally. The people had the right to use jungles freely. The king was entitled to demand forced labour from the people once in a fortnight or 10 days. The Brahmanas learned in the Vedas were exempted from taxes but those Brahmanas who were not learned in the Vedas had to pay taxes. The taxes, on the whole, were not oppressive. The king was to be very careful about the finances of the state and attended to the same daily. He was always to see that the income was more than the expenditure and there was always a large money in the reserve fund.

Justice was administered by the king with the help of a minister and a council of four castes. Witnesses were examined by the parties. There was also the system of ordeals. Fines were imposed on the rich and the poor were thrown into prisons. The jurors were

employed from the locality but there were no pleaders. The system of arbitration seems to have been popular. It was considered to be the sacred duty of the king to punish the wicked. It was sinful to accept bribes. The offence of theft was punished with great severity.

The army was regularly paid and every soldier got both in cash and kind. The Commander-in-Chief was in-charge of the whole army. The four arms of the army were infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. In addition to them, there were the services of transport, navy, spies, and scouts. The foot-soldiers were armed with a sword or a spear. Strong-bodied persons used the Gada or mace. The use of armour was common. Elephants were used both for offensive and defensive purposes. Archery reached the zenith of its glory. Warriors fought to the music of drums, Nadyas and Mridangas. The army was arranged in different formations and the most famous was known as Chakravyuha. Fighting was conducted according to certain rules. It was the age of chivalry. Fighting was the duty of the Kshatriyas and it was most shameful to run away from the battlefield. He who died in the battlefield went straight to heaven. A warrior was not to fight a woman or a person resembling a woman. A person who was wounded or who fell in the battlefield, was not to be attacked. However, the destruction of the country of the enemy by fire was considered to be legitimate. The use of war-chariots was very common. Fire-weapons or missiles were freely used. Lord Krishna used the Sudarshana Chakra to destroy the Kaurvas. There is also a reference to the Vimanas.

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                |  |
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## CHAPTER XI

### THE CASTE SYSTEM

According to Sir H. Risley, a caste is "a collection of families or groups of families, bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with a mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community". According to Dr. V.A. Smith, a caste may be defined as "a group of families internally united by peculiar rules for the observance of ceremonial purity, especially in the matter of diet and marriage". According to Shama Sastri, "Caste means a social exclusiveness with reference to diet and marriage. Birth and rituals are secondary."

*Origin.* There is a difference of opinion among scholars with regard to the origin of the caste system although it is admitted on all hands that it is a very ancient institution. According to Prof. Rapson, the origin of the caste system is due to the distinction between the white and dark complexion of the Aryans and the original residents. Originally, society was divided into two parts, the Aryans and the non-Aryans (who were condemned to the Sudra class in years to come).

According to Dr. V.A. Smith, most of the misunderstanding on the subject of caste system has arisen from the persistent mis-translation of Manu's term "Varna" as caste, whereas it should be rendered class or order or by some equivalent term. The compiler of the Institutes of Manu was aware of the distinction between Varna and Jati. While he mentions about 50 castes, he refers to only four Varnas.

According to Sham Sastri, the words "Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras were names of classes rather than of castes during the pre-historic period." Again, "Varna, once a common name of all castes, perhaps taken from the colour of the garments that were different with different classes, as for example, white for the Brahmanas, red for the Kshatriyas, Vaisyas yellow and black for the Sudras, came to mean a caste in post-Buddhistic literature."

According to H.G. Rawlinson, caste is a Portuguese word meaning purity of race. The original idea of caste was that of colour (Varna). The fair-skinned Aryans looked down upon the dark-skinned Dasyus.

According to Dr. Gokhale, the Indian terms used to describe the caste system are Varna and Jati, complexion and birth. The former refers to racial difference and the latter means "birth" and "descent." It was to mark off the racial difference between the

Aryans and non-Aryans that the terms Arya-Varna and 'Das-Varna' first came into use, and they are used as such in the Rigveda. When the Aryans came to India as invaders with radical differences in complexion, religion, customs and manners between them and the non-Aryan inhabitants, there came about the first broad grouping in the Aryan society. Politically, the Aryans were the conquerors and the non-Aryans the conquered and racially the former were of a fair complexion whereas the latter were dark.

According to Nesfield, the decisive factor in the growth of the caste system was professional specialisation. Occupations were classed in order of rank—hunting or fishing, stock-breeding, agriculture, manual or servile labour, trade, priesthood.

According to Sir Herbert Risley, caste was a matter of race. To quote him, "It is scarcely a paradox to lay down, as a law of the caste organisation, that the social status of the members of a particular group varies in inverse ratio to the mean relative width of their noses".

According to Senart, castes were grafted on to ancient "classes"—those of the Vedic age and the original united Aryans. However, there is a difference of opinion between class and caste. Class "serves political ambitions", while caste "obeys strict scruples, traditional customs, at the very most certain local influences, which usually have no connection with class interests. The two institutions may, by the reaction of systems on facts, have become incorporated; but in essence they are independent". If "the existing system of castes was fitted into old divisions of race and class which were drawn for that purpose", it was under the influence of properly Indian conditions. The fact that the Vedas do not mention the Sudras but merely refer to the Dasyus, shows that the natives were not yet assimilated. Their incorporation into the Aryan fold later on was expressed by admission into a fourth caste. According to Senart, Varna means the class, a group more or less clearly defined, vaguely hereditary, afterwards transformed by Brahmanic theory into those legal fictions, the four castes, whereas Jati would mean the real caste, strictly hereditary and exclusive but more concrete than the alleged "four castes". Legislation which was well-founded only for the Jatis was transferred to the Varnas in accordance with an abstract conception which never corresponded to reality.

The Brahmanas attribute a divine origin to caste system. They base their views on the tenth Mandal of the Rigveda called the Purusha Sukta. It asserts that the Brahmana was born out of the mouth of Brahma, the Kshatriya from his arms, the Vaishya from his stomach, and the Sudra from his feet. As the Vedas are the revealed books and contain nothing but the truth, so the division of society as given therein is attributed to divine ordinance.

To an impartial student of history, none of the above views seems to contain the whole truth. The Nordic races had a sort of caste system amongst themselves. Amongst the Greeks and Romans also, there existed freemen and slaves. Amongst the early Iranians, some such distinctions of society existed. Even the Anglo-

Govt



Saxons who dominated the whole of Europe had the Earls, Ceorls and the Theowas. The last group was hardly better than a Sudra. These groups were based on birth. Even at the present day in England and elsewhere, Counts, Dukes and Archdukes are relics of those days although the basis is not essentially the same. It leads us to think that there was something in early social structure which permitted the division of society into classes. Later on, when the Aryans came and settled in the Indo-Gangetic plains, both colour and occupations contributed to the development of a system which was called the caste system. In other countries, the old distinctions disappeared with the passage of time, but in India certain peculiar circumstances forced the society to continue with this unnatural distinction.

*Growth of the System.* The caste system in early stages was flexible. One could easily cross from one caste to another. The famous Parshurama was a Brahmana by birth, although a Kshatriya by profession. Visvamitra, a Kshatriya by birth, became a Brahmrishi, the highest of the Rishis. The famous Rishi Vasishta was the son of a prostitute, while Vyas who is stated to be the author of the original Mahabharata, was the son of a fisher-woman. Rishi Parashar, the famous law-giver, was the son of a Chandala, the lowest of the Sudras. The author of one of the hymns of the Rigveda says thus: "I am a composer of hymns, my father is a physician, my mother grinds corn on a stone. We are all engaged in different occupations". As time went on, these castes became very rigid and the crossing over became impossible. These were regarded to be by birth and not by the work that one did. Later on, the four castes came to be divided further into many sub-castes, each with a definite status and position in the bigger caste-group. These sub-castes might have grown out of little faulting here and there. Some new castes were formed by the admission of non-Aryans into the fold of Aryans. Thus, the caste system was an instrument of civilization by which the new people as a whole were allotted a status in the Aryan society.

Caste taboos crept in during the later Vedic society. The study of the Sutras gives us some interesting examples of untouchability in those days. According to the Gautama Sutra, a Brahmana could not eat food except from the 'reborn'. He was allowed to accept food from Sudras only in rare cases. Another Sutra says that "no one was to initiate low castes nor teach them, nor perform sacrifice for them nor have intercourse with them". Thus we find that the caste system developed rigidity so far as the Sudras or low-castes were concerned. But there was no rigidity among the three upper castes. It is also not certain whether in the Vedic period, the Brahmanas were superior to the Kshatriyas. Often the princes and Kshatriyas asserted their superiority over the Brahmanas but it was perhaps never admitted.

In the later Hindu period, the institution of caste developed further. The Buddhists and the Jains did not take animal diet at all and so they formed separate groups within their castes. When

they were later on reclaimed by Hinduism, they again formed distinct groups under the parent castes. When the Greeks invaded India, the Aryans did not mix with them and called them the "Yavanas". But later on, when the Indo-Bactrians and Indo-Parthians settled in India and were absorbed into Hindu society, they formed sub-castes with their peculiar modes of life. Similarly, the Huns, when absorbed in Hindu society, gave birth to many new sub-castes. Inter-marriage among the various castes further gave rise to many new castes. The caste system demanded from the incoming foreigners a unified Hindu way of life though at the same time, within their own sphere, they could live according to their peculiar ways.

The Muslim invasions further increased the rigidity of the caste system. The Muslims came not only to conquer India, but also to conquer the Hindu culture. The Hindus defended themselves by an increased rigidity of the caste system. The brotherhoods of the various castes did not let any individual in their caste to betray his faith or defy the caste rules. Besides, the upper castes began to hate those lower castes which had any dealings with the Muslims whom they called "Malechhas". The contempt for lower castes was also due to the Muhammedan conquest of India. Besides, a number of new religious sects—Sikhs, Dadupanthis, Vaishnavas and Satnamis were founded to check the spread of Islam in India. These sects and their various branches, in course of time, gave birth to many new sub-castes. Thus, today, according to Ketkar, the original four castes have multiplied to such an extent that there are as many as 3,000 castes in India.

*Position of Various Castes.* The Brahmanas as a class were considered to be the highest in society. Their duty, according to the Dharma-Sastras, was to read and teach the Vedic literature and to perform various sacrifices for themselves and for others. They were to live on the charity of the people or on the fees obtained by the performance of various rites. This was the intellectual aristocracy from which were drawn the best brains of the day. They were expected to maintain a very high standard of morality and were to be an ideal for the rest of society. They were not to covet wealth, power or any worldly gain. Their only job was to make an effort to realise the truth by leading the best of life, an ideal for others. Sometimes they turned out to be the best of the soldiers as well. Dronacharya, a teacher by profession, was one of the best soldiers of his times.

The Kshatriyas were primarily concerned with the administration of the country, especially defence. As political power was the most important power, the Kshatriyas often asserted their superiority over the Brahmanas. To the Kshatriyas, the door of learning was always open. Probably, the Upanishadas were produced by them. King Janak was one of the profoundest scholars of the Vedas in his times.

The Vaishyas were connected with the economic life of the country. They were responsible for the production of wealth. As

India was and has been an agricultural country, the Vaishyas tilled the land and reared cattle. They also carried on trade and commerce. Sometimes, they even became kings and warriors.

The Sudras were the strangest creation of the Indo-Aryans. They were denied the study of the Vedic literature and the wearing of sacred thread. Mixing with them was not permitted to the three upper castes as they were untouchables. This section of society became the most under-developed and their lot was the hardest.

### *Merits of the System*

(1) The very fact that the institution of caste has survived about three thousand years, is a clear proof of the services which it must have rendered to Hindu society in different periods of history. It is the caste system that has been largely responsible for the preservation of Hindu religion and culture. The caste brotherhoods, on account of their policy of exclusiveness, did not mix with the foreigners. So the Greeks, Huns or Muslims could not conquer Hindu culture. On the contrary, most of these foreigners were themselves absorbed into the Hindu fold.

(2) The caste system is based on the sound economic principle of division of labour which ensures efficiency of production. A person from his birth knew what profession he was to follow later on. So from the start, he devoted all his energy to the one profession of his forefathers. It was because of this reason that in every period of Indian history, there was no dearth of highly-skilled workers and scholars. Megasthenes, Hieun Tsang, Alberuni, Ibn Batuta, Babur and even the early Britishers were impressed by the talents and artistic skill of the Indians in every art and craft.

(3) The caste provided a means of social insurance and promoted social service activities. It helped the sick and the needy and sometimes advanced money to its poor members. It made the individuals learn the lessons of self-sacrifice and of subordinating the individual will to the collective will. Along with the guilds, the castes enforced social and economic discipline among their members.

(4) The caste system has also been responsible for preserving the purity of blood among the various groups of Hindus even up to this day. Each caste made rigid rules for marriages. Inter-caste marriages were forbidden, and in this way India was able to preserve racial purity to a large extent.

(5) According to Masani, "The concept of organic unity and inter-dependence ran through the whole caste-system. Even when it was sought to deduce divine sanction for the ascendancy of the superior orders on the hypothesis that the four castes had emanated from four different limbs of the Creator of Universe, the underlying idea was not of detachment but of union. Each unit formed part of the whole. Every one had, therefore, to perform his duty towards himself and society at large. While none was allowed to remain in want, each was under an obligation, as long as he was able, to contribute his share of labour, according to his capacity and calling, for the benefit

of society. Such an attitude of mind brought all the castes, their beliefs, customs and activities, under one common system. Every one found a place appointed for him, every one had his legacy of the common tradition, common creed, and common ethical code in addition to the special legacy of hereditary skill for the fulfilment of the part to which he was called. The system conduced to the solidarity of castes as distinct units of the social organization; it prompted effective association not only of the different members of each group but also of group and groups. Thus was the ancient tradition preserved, social tranquillity safeguarded, civil and economic welfare secured, individual happiness and contentment promoted." (*The Legacy of India*).

### *Demerits*

(1) But the caste system, and particularly the caste system as it stands today, has done more harm than good. Sir Henry Maine describes the caste system "as the most disastrous and blighting of human institutions". It is anti-national. Caste-prejudices and caste-feuds have always dominated our history. At the time of grave foreign dangers, only a section of the people, the Kshatriyas, fought against the enemy. Other castes, being ignorant of fighting, stayed away in their homes. This led to many great disasters. Caste rivalries were also responsible for many troubles in the days of the Rajputs and the Marathas.

(2) A caste system based on the principle of birth is undesirable. The social divisions, according to the Gita, should be based on "Guna" and "Karma", i.e., character and function. The present grouping of Indian castes is based on birth and so it makes no provision for "low-born talents" to rise, and "high-born incompetents" to occupy a low position. In this way, it is also open to grave and genuine criticism.

(3) According to V.A. Smith, one of its chief defects is that "it shuts off Indians from free association with foreigners", thus making it difficult for Indians to understand them. The upper castes, particularly the Brahmanas, would not mix with foreigners (even with the ruling classes) and consequently created innumerable difficulties and often hindered hearty co-operation between the Indians and foreigners during the various periods of Indian History.

(4) The caste system has been responsible for narrow outlook and caste exclusiveness. Till recently, the Indians lived according to caste-customs and never bothered about the general affairs of the country. Castes hindered the growth of nationalism. On account of the above reasons, an average Indian is conservative and stay-at-home.

(5) But the chief curse of the caste system is "untouchability". The upper castes did not regard the low-caste Sudras as even human beings. They were treated with contempt. Their shadow defiled the upper classes. Their touch was unbearable. They could not touch the utensils, clothes and water of the upper castes. They could not even draw water from the wells of the upper castes to quench their thirst. They could not worship in the temples of the upper castes.



They were not treated as men but as chattels. The system did not give the ordinary human rights to a large section of Indian people. No wonder, protests were raised against this evil and the Government of India banned untouchability in all its shapes and forms in the new Constitution of India.

(6) Caste is anti-democratic and denies equal rights to all. A man cannot join any profession or calling. Nor does every man, high or low, enjoy the same privileges. Nor can he marry the woman of his own choice. All these are opposed to the spirit of democracy.

(7) According to Rawlinson, by splitting the people into a number of water-tight compartments, the caste-system rendered the growth of a national spirit almost impossible and it was one of the reasons why India for centuries was at the mercy of foreign conquerors.

(8) According to R. P. Masani, class consciousness is good, but when it kills national consciousness, it becomes a serious drawback. "Caste patriotism is valuable as the first step to nationalism, but, when it degenerates into sectarianism and checks the growth of nationality, it is an unmitigated evil. Caste loyalty is a virtue, but when it degenerates into passive disloyalty to the state, it is a positive crime. Caste restrictions on actions likely to undermine the foundations of the social structure are wholesome; but, when such restrictions lead to disabling inequalities and denial of social justice, as in the case of the untouchables, now mercifully called Harijans, they are a curse".

(9) The caste system has broken the solidarity of Hindu society, suppressed the liberty of individuals and has become the instrument of oppression. It is a mill-stone round the neck of the Hindus and is dragging them with rapid speed towards political and social decline. The caste system has outlived its utility. It is difficult to live according to the caste-rules and prejudices in modern times. According to Principal S.R. Sharma, caste system is like a bad coin. We should melt it and remint the same for our modern use.

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## CHAPTER XII

### JAINISM

There was a time when it was believed that Jainism was merely a branch of Buddhism. However, it was later on found by scholars that Jainism was a separate religion by itself. The earlier identity between Buddhism and Jainism was due to the fact that both religions put emphasis on the law of Karma and Ahimsa. Likewise, it was believed at the beginning that Mahavira was the founder of Jainism in the same way as Buddha was the founder of Buddhism. However, it is now recognised that Mahavira was the twenty-fourth Tirthankara or Prophet of Jainism. The sacred books of the Jains tell us that the real founder of Jainism was Rishabha who was succeeded by 23 Tirthankaras. According to the orthodox view, Rishabha was the father of King Bharata, the first Chakravartin king of India.

#### Parsvanath

Parsvanath was the twenty-third Tirthankara or Prophet and he seems to have been an historical figure. According to Prof. Jacobi, Parsvanath was the real founder of Jainism. According to the Kalpasutra of Bhadrabahu written in the time of Chandragupta Maurya, Parsvanath was a Kshatriya. He was the son of Asvasena, King of Banaras. He was married to Prabhavati, daughter of King Naravarman. As a prince, he was very much loved by the people. He lived as a house-holder for 30 years and then became an ascetic. After deep meditation for 83 days, he attained the highest knowledge called Kevalam.

#### Mahavira

Mahavira was the last Tirthankara. He is stated to have been born in a suburb of Vaisali. The name of his father was Siddhartha who was the head of the Kshatriya clan called the Jantrikas. Siddhartha was married to princess Trishala, sister of Chetaka who was the ruler of Vaisali. The original name of Mahavira was Vardhamana.

There is a lot of controversy regarding the date of birth of Mahavira. According to the traditional date, his death took place 470 years before the birth of Vikrama, whose era began 18 years later in 58 B.C. According to this view, the death of Mahavira ought to have taken place in 546 B.C. ( $470 + 58 + 18$ ). Hemchandra dates the reign of Chandragupta in 313 B.C. He also states that this took place 155 years after the death of Mahavira. Thus, according to Hemchandra, the death of Mahavira should have taken place in 468 B.C. Both Mahavira and Buddha were contemporaries and only that date can be acceptable which is applicable to both.

Vardhamana married Yashoda and a daughter was born to him. His parents died and with the permission of his elder brother, Vardhamana became an ascetic. For twelve long years, he wandered from place to place doing penance. According to the Acharangasutra, "He wandered naked and homeless. People struck him and mocked at him—unconcerned, he continued in his meditations. In Ladha, the inhabitants persecuted him and set dogs on him. They beat him with sticks and with their feet, and threw fruits, clods of earth and potsherds on him. They disturbed him in his meditations by all sorts of torments. But like a hero in the fore-front of the battle, Mahavira withstood it all. Whether he was wounded or not, he never sought medical aid. He took no kind of medicaments, he never washed, did not bathe and never cleaned his teeth. In winter, he meditated in the shade; in the heat of the summer he seated himself in the scorching sun. Often he drank no water for months. Sometimes he took meal only every sixth, eighth, tenth or twelfth day, and pursued his meditations without craving".

In the 13th year, "he reached Nirvana under a Sal tree near an old temple in the field belonging to a householder named Samaga on the river Rijupalika outside the town called Jrimbhikagrama, becoming an Arhata, a Jina, and a Kevalin, an omniscient".

*Teachings of Mahavira.* Mahavira did not believe in the existence of God. He did not believe that God created and controlled the whole of universe. His view was that God is "only the highest, the noblest and the fullest manifestation of all the powers which lie latent in the soul of man". It was all waste of time to recite the Mantras or perform the sacrifices. The three essentials for good life were right faith, right knowledge and right action. These three things were called the three jewels or Ratna. Mahavira asked his followers to live a life of virtue and morality. Every kind of pain and injury was to be given to the body to realise the truth. Death by gradual starvation was recommended. Even suicide was advocated, marriages were forbidden and a life of celibacy was prescribed. The followers were asked to discard clothes and go about naked.

Mahavira put great stress on Ahimsa. According to him, not only men and animals but also plants, wind and fire had souls. Pain or injury was felt by stones and plants in the same way as was felt by men and animals. Under the circumstances, it was desirable that no injury should be done to animals, birds, plants, etc.

The highest goal to be achieved was Kevalin. Without "intuitive knowledge", one was bound to commit sins and when sins were committed, rebirth became inevitable. A person could be released from the cycle of rebirths only after attaining the "Siddha Silla"

According to Mahavira, everybody should try to annihilate Karma by practising austerities and shutting out the influx of bad Karma. The austerities prescribed by Mahavira were fasting, graduated abstention from food from a full meal of 32 morsels to one of one morsel, begging, giving up delicious food, mortification of the flesh, study, humility, service, etc.

According to the Jain accounts, a terrible famine visited Magadha in the time of Chandragupta Maurya. Year after year, the monsoons failed. The result was that all the accumulated stores of grain were consumed. Half the Jain community moved to South India under the leadership of Bhadrabahu and settled in a place known as Sravana-Belgola. King Chandragupta Maurya also accompanied them. Chandragupta committed suicide by self-starvation. When the famine ended after 12 years, the emigrants came back to the north. The returning monks condemned those monks who had stayed behind and called them as heretics. The differences began to increase between the two sections. With a view to bring about a compromise, a Jain Council was held at Pataliputra but the monks who had come back from the South refused to participate in the deliberations. Bhadrabahu had retired to Nepal and he allowed Sthulabhadra to teach only ten Parvas out of 14 Parvas. It is pointed out that the Jain Council at Pataliputra established only a part of the Jain canon called Sidhanta from which the canon of the Svetambaras has been derived. The view of the returning monks was that the original canon had been completely lost.

Another Jain Council was held in Vallabhi in Gujarat under the presidency of Devariddhi Gani. The object of the Council was to collect all the sacred texts and give them the shape of books. The result of the second Jain Council was that the Jain canon was given a definite shape in which it is to be found even today.

It has rightly been pointed out that Jainism, though a rebellious daughter, was nonetheless a daughter of Brahmanism. Many leading beliefs of the Hindus are still held by the Jains. Much of their worship exactly resembles the Hindu worship. Their domestic chaplains, though not their temple officiants, are still Brahmanas.

Jainism spread in all parts of India but after some time, it began to decline. The Jains attribute the first destruction of their temples to the hostility of the Brahmanas, especially under Ajaypala, in 1174-76 A.D. However, it is pointed out that the injuries inflicted by him were nothing in comparison with the destruction brought about by the Muslims. Ala-ud-din Khilji who conquered Gujarat in 1297-98 is described as "the bloody" by the Jains. He razed many of their temples to the ground. He massacred their community and destroyed their libraries. Many of the most beautiful Muslim mosques in India have been built out of the material taken from the Jain shrines.

*Jain Buildings.* Like the Buddhists, the Jains built Bhiksugrihas or cave-dwellings for the residence of their monks. Their best examples still exist at Udayagiri (Tiger Cave), at Ellora (Indra Sabha), Lakkundi Pulitana, Mount Abu, at Girnar, ruins at Parsvanatha Hill, at Ranpur in Jodhpur, the Ghantai and Adinath temple, and at Chittor. In South India, there are beautiful Jain shrines at Sravana Belgola, at Mudabidri and at Guruvayankeri. There are traces of several Jain temples having been converted into mosques and the most important



examples are the Adhai Din Ka Jhopra at Ajmer, the Kutab near New Delhi, and buildings at Kanauj, Dhar and many other places.

*Jain Literature and Writers.* Both the Svetambara and Digambara sects called their sacred books the Agama-Siddhanta. Both of them agree in calling the 12 Angas as the first and most important part of their canon. The Siddhanta comprises 45 to 50 books. The Parvas contained the original doctrine in 14 texts which Mahavira himself taught in Ardha-Magadhi Prakrit to his disciples.

Two hundred years after the death of Mahavira, a Jain Council met at Pataliputra and decided the canon of sacred literature, but that was not accepted by all the Jains. Sthandila at Mathura and Nagarjuna at Valabhi made efforts to settle the old canon of the Jains. However, this work was successfully done by the Second Jain Council held at Valabhi in the 5th Century A.D. The present texts in Ardhamagadhi belong to the Svetambara Jains. The canonical texts are divided into six groups and those are the 12 Angas, 12 Upangas, 10 Prakirnas, 6 Chheda Sutras, 4 Mula-Sutras and 4 miscellaneous texts. The Angas explain the Jain doctrines with the help of legends and theories. They also prescribe the rules of conduct for the Jain monks. The Prakirnas are in verse and they deal with various aspects of Jainism. The Chheda Sutras contain the rules of discipline to be observed in the monasteries and also prescribe the penalty for breaking those rules. The Mulasutras deal with the basic doctrines of Jainism.

The Jain monks wrote Niryuktis or commentaries. Siddhasena and Samghadasa re-arranged the commentaries and gave them in the form of Bhashyas. To begin with, the commentaries written by the Jain scholars were in Prakrit, but later on they began to write in Sanskrit. Instead of the Churnis in Prakrit, the Jain writers wrote the Tikas in Sanskrit. Haribhadra was a Jain scholar who lived in the 9th century A.D. He used Sanskrit for the expression of his views. Akalanka, Pujiyapada and Siddhasena did a lot for the development of Jain philosophy.

Like the Svetambara Jains, the Digambara Jains also had their own literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit. Kundakunda was a great Digambara scholar. The other Digambara scholars were Vattakera, Swami Kartikeya and Yati Vrishabha and they all wrote in Prakrit. However, Samantabhadra and Manatunga wrote in Sanskrit.

The Charitras give the stories of the Tirthankaras and sages. The Prabhandhas deal with the life of Jain monks.

In Tamil literature, Jain poets held a high place for centuries. The Jivaka Chintamani which is perhaps the finest of all Tamil poems, is a Jain work. The Kural of Tiruvalluvar is considered to be the masterpiece of Tamil literature. Its author was a Jain. According to Bishop Caldwell, the tone of this book is "more Jainia than anything else". An old Tamil dictionary and an old Tamil grammar are attributed to Jain writers. The latter also laid the foundations of Telugu literature. It is pointed out that classical Kanarese literature begins with a great succession of Jaina poets and scholars.

Hemchandra was probably the greatest of all Jain writers. He was born near Ahmedabad in 1088 A.D. of Jain parents. His mother dedicated him to religious life under the care of a monk called Devachandra who took him to Cambay where he was eventually ordained. At Cambay, he studied logic, dialectics, grammar and poetry and proved himself to be a past master in every branch of study he took up. He was appointed the spokesman of the Jain community at Anhilvada Patana to welcome the great Chalukya king, Jayasimha Siddharaja, on his return from a famous victory in Malwa. His poem won the heart of the king and he was appointed the court Pandit and court annalist in the royal capital. He compiled two lexicons and wrote his famous Prakrit grammar. He also wrote a number of hand-books, lives of Jain saints, a history of Gujarat, a work on Yoga Sastra, etc. He died of self-starvation in the approved Jain fashion.

A lot of work has been done on Jainism by Prof. Buhler, Prof. Jacobi, Dr. Hoernle, Dr. Banarsidas Jain, Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson and Shah.

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
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## CHAPTER XIII

### BUDDHISM

#### Condition of Hindu Society before Buddha

(1) The rise of Buddhism and Jainism was facilitated by the condition of Hindu society on the eve of Buddha's birth. The Hindu society had lost its former glory and many kinds of abuses and superstitions had crept into it. The Brahmanas had a monopoly in the field of religion and they behaved as unscrupulous human-beings. They encouraged superstition and tried to extort as much as they could from the people. The Vedic idea of the divine power of speech was developed into the philosophical concept of the Mantram as the human expression of the etheric vibrations which permeate space and which were the first knowable cause of creation itself. The Mantram was a Sanskrit formula composed on certain sequence of sounds and rhythms. It was said to control the etheric vibration and produce effects, beneficial or otherwise, to the persons or objects concerned. It was believed that a Mantram could bring victory or defeat in wars. It could assure prosperity of a state or the destruction of its enemies. It could be used to win votes in the popular assembly or to silence the arguments of an opponent. Either by itself alone or in conjunction with medical prescriptions, the Mantram could stop a cough or help the growth of hair. It embodied in itself the dynamic principle of the universe. There was no concern of daily life which could not be affected one way or the other by the Mantram.

If the Brahmana priests had lived up to the high ideal of purity and altruism, the use of the Mantram would have been either harmless or helped the growth of moral and religious life among the people. However, the Brahmanical theory of the Mantram implied that it contained in itself a divine principle and the compelling power of the deity itself. The Mantram was used even by those Brahmana priests who had no great learning and who also did not possess any high moral character. The use of the Mantram by unscrupulous and ignorant priests encouraged superstition among the masses and thereby acted as a hindrance to civilisation and a source of exaction and cruelty.

(2) The same was the case with sacrifices. In the course of many centuries, the performance of sacrificial rites was transformed into a fine art and only Brahmana experts could perform them properly. It was pointed out that the efficacy of the sacrifice depended upon the Dakshina or the money paid to the officiating priest or priests and their servants. Every attempt was made by the Brahmana priests to multiply the number of sacrifices which were required to be performed by every householder. Some sacrifices were small and others were great but the Brahmana priests enriched themselves on

both the occasions. A lot of money of the state was spent on the occasion of the coronation of the king and the performance of horse sacrifices. Thousands of Brahmanas were feasted. They all had to be given Dakshina on a liberal scale. A very large number of animals were killed on those occasions. The whole of the attention of the state was concentrated on the performance of sacrifices. The work of the state was bound to suffer but the Brahmana priests were able to assert their superiority and also put some money in their pockets. This was not liked by the people. As regards the sacrifices to be performed by the householder, the latter had himself to preside over some of those sacrifices. Sacrifices were made to get sons. Birth sacrifices had to be repeated every month. Sacrifices had also to be made on the occasion of the performance of many Samskaras. The indiscriminate slaughter of animals, the intoxication of Brahmanas with the Soma juice and the demand of Dakshina from the householders and the state, must have created a lot of bitterness against the Brahmanical priests. The people must have got fed up with the sad state of affairs in which the Brahmanas figured as exploiters and **they themselves as their victims.**

(3) Another superstition was encouraged by the Brahmana priests among the people and that related to the practice of Tapas or self-torture by which it was believed that both gods and men acquired spiritual insight and command over the forces of nature. Sitting between five fires or upon ant-head in the forest and standing upon one leg and holding an arm above the head until its muscles were atrophied were considered to be the means for establishing mastery over the physical senses and ultimately over the universe. Even gods were bound to submit to the will of such people. Starvation was expected to bring about similar results.

(4) The Hindu religion presented a confusing mass of things which was beyond the comprehension of the man in the street. The hymns of the Vedas were too difficult for them to understand and appreciate. Even the Brahmanas found it difficult to interpret them. The deep philosophy of the Upanishads was too difficult for the common man. Even the philosophy of the Sastras and Sutras was not having any effect on the people. In other words, if the masses did not understand Hinduism, they could not be expected to have any love for the same. The Vedic religion, with the lofty ideas and ideals of God, soul, salvation and creation of the world was merely a rattle which did not satisfy the inner craving of the people. It was felt that there was an urgent necessity of a religion which, though less deep and profound, was understood by the people and could be made by them a part and parcel of their lives.

(5) The lives of the Brahmana priests were not above reproach. They lived the most worldly and corrupt lives. As a matter of fact, they were becoming the very embodiment of vices. That was merely a corollary of the enormous wealth possessed by them.

(6) The Hindu society was suffering from evils of the caste system which condemned the low classes or the Sudras to a life of degradation and humiliation. The latter hated the superiority of the



twice-born and were willing to avail of any opportunity to overthrow the predominance of those whom they hated and detested.

(7) The Kshatriyas and Vaishyas also detested the supremacy of the Brahmanas. In spite of their superior physical force and wealth, they had to put up with the arrogance of the Brahmanas who did practically nothing for the good of society. It was in this atmosphere that Buddhism and Jainism made their appearance.

*Life of Buddha.* Siddhartha or Buddha was the founder of Buddhism. He is also called "The Enlightened One", "Tathagata" (one who has attained the truth) and the Saga of the Sakyas. We do not possess any authentic account of the life of Gautama Buddha but we have to rely upon comparatively later works which appear to have preserved older traditions handed down in some form of ballad poetry. Suddhodana was the name of his father and Mahamaya the name of his mother. According to the Sinhalese tradition, the death of Buddha took place in 543 B.C. and as he died at the age of 80, he must have been born in 623 B.C. This date is stated to be confirmed by the information found in the Hathigumpha inscription of King Kharavela of Kalinga. However, this date conflicts with the ascertained date of Asoka whose consecration took place 218 years after the Nirvana of Buddha. It is known that the consecration of Asoka took place in about 269 B.C. but if we accept 543 B.C. as the date of the Nirvana of Buddha, the date of consecration of Asoka comes to about 325 B.C. Hence the date 623 B.C. for the birth of Buddha is rejected.

Moreover, it is stated that a dot was put in record each year after the Nirvana of Buddha and the practice was continued in Canton up to the year 489 A.D. The total number of dots in that year was 975. If we deduct 489 from 975, we get 486 or 487 B.C. as the date of the death of Buddha. If we deduct 218 from 487 we arrive at 269 B.C. which according to the evidence of the Greek writers, was the date of the consecration of Asoka.

By another calculation, we come to 487 B.C. as the date of the death of Buddha. Chandragupta Maurya must have ascended the throne some time after the death of Alexander and the first partition treaty of Babylon in 323 B.C. We can assume reasonably the accession of Chandragupta Maurya in about 322 B.C. According to the Puranas, Chandragupta reigned for 24 years and his son Bindusara for 25 years. If we deduct the period of their reigns, Asoka can ascend the throne in about 273 B.C. Asoka's consecration took place after four years and this means 269 B.C. This also tallies with the other view that Asoka was consecrated 218 years after the Nirvana. If we deduct 218 from 487, we arrive at the figure of 269 B.C.

Under the circumstances, 487 B.C. is taken to be the year of death of Buddha and 567 B.C. as the date of his birth.

The child called Siddhartha was brought up in great luxury and was married at the age of sixteen. His wife has been called by various names, e.g., Yasodhara, Gopa, Bimba etc. At the age of 29

a son was born to him and he was given the name of Rabula. Siddhartha felt that "a bond was born to him".

The Buddhists refer to what are called "Four Great Signs" which profoundly affected the life of the young Siddhartha. It is stated that one evening his charioteer, Chhanna, drove the prince in the city and he came across an old man who had been given up by his people. He saw another man suffering from the agony of disease and Chhanna told him that that was the fate of every human being. Then he saw a dead man surrounded by weeping relatives. The fourth sign was that of a mendicant who had given up the world and was moving about in search of truth.

These experiences had already affected the mind of Siddhartha and when a son was born to him, he decided immediately to renounce the world. He left his wife and child sleeping and went away accompanied by Chhanna, the charioteer.

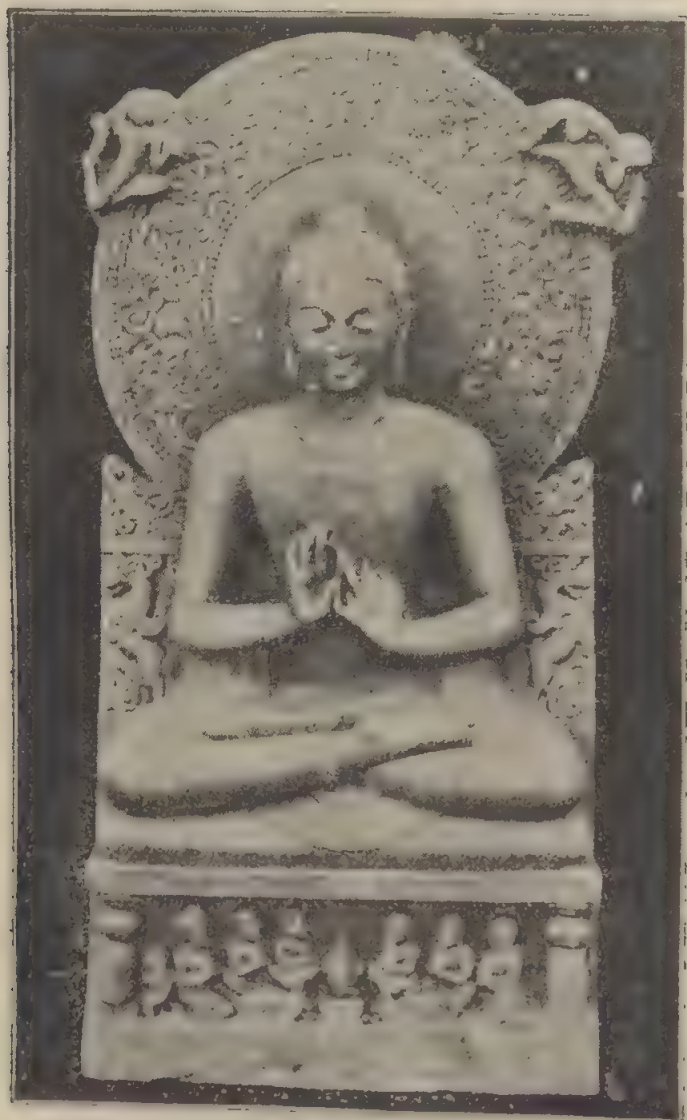
Prince Siddhartha sat under the feet of Alara and Udraka at Rajgriha and learnt from them the art of concentration of mind and "neither consciousness nor non-consciousness." From there, he went to Uruvela and practised so great penances that he was reduced to a mere skeleton. In spite of his sufferings, he did not get enlightenment. After that, he tried to get enlightenment by keeping himself away from sensual desires and evil ideas. He also started taking food. One day, he sat under a Pipal tree and took the following vow: "I will not leave this place till I attain that peace of mind which I have been trying for all these years." Many difficulties came in his way. He was both threatened and tempted but he refused to leave the Pipal tree. Ultimately it was under the same Pipal tree that Siddhartha got enlightenment and he came to be known as the Buddha or "The Enlightened One." This happened when Buddha was 35.

After having got enlightenment, Buddha decided to dedicate the rest of his life to the good of the people. This he did for 45 years. During all these years, Buddha was always on the move with his followers and admirers. The first sermon was given by him at Sarnath near Banaras. This was called the "Dharma Chakra Pravartana" or "turning of the wheel of Law." Buddha travelled in various parts of the country. He visited his native-land also and his son Rahul became a monk. He died at the age of 80.

*Teachings of Buddha.* Buddha taught for 45 years through conversation, lectures and parables. His method of teaching was unique. He walked from town to town accompanied by his favourite disciples, and followed by as many as 1,200 devotees. He took no thought for the morrow and was contented to be fed by local admirers. Ordinarily, he stopped near some village and pitched his camp in some garden or wood or on some river-bank. The afternoon was given to meditation and evening to instruction.

His favourite Sutra was the "Four Noble Truths" which emphasized the fact that life was full of pain which could be removed only by the removal of all desires.

(1) The first truth is the existence of sorrow. "All here is transient, sorrowful and full of pain."



Buddha

(2) The second truth is the cause of sorrow. Desire is the cause of all evils and hence it must be removed. Says Buddha:

“Senses and things perceived mingle and light  
 Passions’ quick spark of fire;  
 So flameth Trishna, lust and thirst of things;  
 Eager ye cleave to shadows, dote on dreams;  
 A false self in the midst ye plant, and make  
 A world around which seems.”

(3) The third truth is sorrow ceasing. Sorrow can be ended only by the elimination of desires. When sorrow ends, there is perfect bliss. Life and death end. “The dew-drop slips into the shining sea.”

(4) The fourth truth is that there must be a way to attain bliss and end desires. That was through the noble eight-fold path.

The same four noble truths were explained by Buddha in the following words:

1. “Now this, O monks, is the noble truth of pain : birth is painful, sickness is painful, old age is painful, sorrow, lamentation, dejection and despair are painful.”

2. “Now this, O monks, is the noble truth of the cause of pain : that craving, which leads to rebirth, combined with pleasure and lust, finding pleasure here and there, namely, the craving for passion, the craving for existence, the craving for non-existence.”

3. “Now this, O monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of pain : the cessation, without a remainder, of that craving ; abandonment, forsaking, release, non-attachment.”

4. “Now this, O monks, is the noble truth of the way that leads to the cessation of pain : this is the noble eightfold way : namely, right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.”

Buddha was certain that nobody was able to answer the above question. Whenever he was told that some Brahman claim to know the truth about those facts, his reply was in these words : “There are, brethren, some recluses and Brahmins who wriggle like eels ; and when a question is put to them on this or that they resort to equivocation, to eel-wriggling.” He condemned the Brahmins for taking false pride in their knowledge.

Buddha did not bother about the caste system. He was ready to welcome anybody into the Buddhist Sangha. He gave the following instructions to his disciples : “Go into all lands and preach this gospel. Tell them that the poor and the lowly, the rich and the high, are all one, and that all castes unite in this religion as do the rivers in the sea.”

In Buddha’s philosophy, there was no place for heaven, purgatory or hell. He repudiated animism in every form. Matter has force and all substances motion. Life is change, a neutral stream of becoming an extinction. The soul is myth. The mind is a ghost.



All that exists is the sensations and perceptions themselves following automatically into memories and ideas.

Buddha did not explain clearly his conception of Nirvana. The Buddhist scriptures used the terms as signifying a state of happiness attainable in this life through the complete elimination of selfish desires, the liberation of the individual from rebirth, the annihilation of the individual consciousness, the union of the individual with God and a heaven of happiness after death. In the teachings of Buddha, it seems to mean the extinction of all individual desires and escape from rebirth. The cause and source of Nirvana is the extinction of selfish desires. Nirvana is the painless peace that rewards the moral annihilation of the self. To quote Buddha, "Now, this is the noble truth as to the passing of pain. Verily, it is the passing away so that no passion remains. The giving up, the getting rid of, the emancipation from, the harbouring no longer of, this craving thirst."

**Estimate of Buddha.** According to Will Durant, Buddha was a "man of strong will, authoritative and proud, but of gentle manner and speech, and of infinite benevolence." He claimed 'enlightenment', but not inspiration; he never pretended that a god was speaking through him. In controversy, he was more patient and considerate than any other of the great teachers of mankind."

According to Oldenberg, "In the days when his reputation stood at its highest point, and his name was named throughout India among the foremost names, one might day by day see that man, before whom kings bowed themselves, walking about, begging alms, bowl in hand, through streets and alleys, from house to house and without uttering any request, with downcast look, stand silently waiting until a morsel of food was thrown into his bowl." That shows the great humility of Buddha. Buddha detested divination. To quote him, "It is because I perceive danger in the practice of mystic wonders that I loathe and abhor, and am assured thereof." He was very anxious about truth and wanted the same to be followed by his disciples. He was worried that "all things should be put away, things that are corrupting, entailing birth renewal, bringing sufferings, resulting in ill, making for birth, decay and death in the future; with the things that make for purity shall grow so that full and abounding insight may be attained even here and now." Buddha was impatient of his praise by his pupils. He was unmoved by slander. To quote him, "Who doeth not, when reviled, revile again, a two-fold victory wins." Again, "Abuse that is not answered is like the food rejected by the guest which reverts to the host."

Buddha was a great debater and he was always able to put his opponents on the defence. It was difficult to defeat him. To quote Buddha himself, "That in disputation with any one whatsoever, I could be thrown into confusion or embarrassment—there is no possibility of such a thing; and because I know of no such possibility, on that account it is that I remain quiet and confident."

**Progress of Buddhism.** A few weeks after the death of Buddha, the first Buddhist Council was held at Rajagriha in about 487 B.C.

The discourses of Buddha were collected, classified and adopted as authoritative canonical texts by an assembly of 500 monks representing the various Sanghas. The teachings of Buddha were divided into two parts called the Vinaya Pitaka and Dhamma Pitaka. The President of the Buddhist Council was Mahakassapa. Upali and Ananda were authorities for the Vinaya Pitaka and Dhamma Pitaka.

The second Buddhist Council was held 100 years after the death of Buddha in about 387 B.C. The monks of Vaisali had adopted certain practices which were contrary to the rules of Vinaya Pitaka. This matter was brought before the Buddhist Council but the Vaisali monks refused to change their views and consequently a great schism took place in the Buddhist Church. The orthodox came to be known as Mahasamghikas.

The third Buddhist Council was held at Pataliputra in the reign of Asoka. According to the Ceylonese chronicles, the Council was held 236 years after the death of Buddha and was presided over by Moggaliputta Tissa. The Council made a new classification of the Buddhist canonical texts by the addition of a third Pitaka called the Abhidhamma Pitaka which contained the philosophical interpretation of the doctrines of the two already existing Pitakas. The canonical literature was definitely and authoritatively settled so as to eliminate all disruptive tendencies, making all schisms within the church punishable.

The fourth and last Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir or at Jullundur under the leadership of Vasumitra and Asvaghosha during the reign of Kanishka. This Council settled certain controversial questions arising out of some differences of opinion between the Sarvastivada teachers of Kashmir and Gandhara. Three large commentaries on the Pitakas known as Vibhashas were also prepared.

*Mahayanism.* In the time of Kanishka, a new school of Buddhism known as Mahayanism came into existence. This has to be distinguished from the old form of Buddhism which is called by the name of Hinayanism. Although the name Mahayanism is found for the first time in the reign of Kanishka, its genesis can be found in the teachings of the Buddha himself. According to Buddha himself, there were three ways or vehicles for attaining Nirvana. There were those who wanted to achieve their own salvation as soon as possible without caring for others. They could realise that goal by the attainment of Arhatship. The vehicle was called Arhat-yana or the vehicle of the Arhats. To the second category belonged those persons who wanted to attain their own salvation but at the same time desired to do some beneficial work for others. They could reach their goal by Pratyaka-Buddhayana. To the third category belonged those persons who gave up their own salvation or Nirvana in order to help others and dedicated their lives for that purpose. They belonged to the Buddhayana or the vehicle of Buddha. The followers of Mahayanism were stated to belong to the third category.

Mahayanism differed from Hinayanism in many ways. The Mahayanists introduced a belief in the Bodhisattvas or beings "who

were in the process of obtaining but had not yet obtained, Buddhahood." Many Boddhisattvas claimed the faith and allegiance of the devotees. Buddha was deified. Worship of the images of Buddha was started. It was accompanied by elaborate rituals, charms and formulae. There was no such thing in Hinayanism which was of a very simple nature. Whereas Hinayanism regarded the salvation of the individual as the goal, Mahayanism had as its objective the salvation of all beings. While Hinayanism prescribed self-culture and good deeds as the only way to salvation, Mahayanism began to put more reliance on faith in the devotion to the various Buddhas and Boddhisattvas. While Hinayanism used Pali literature, Sanskrit was adopted as the language of Mahayanism. There were also differences between Mahayanism and Hinayanism with regard to metaphysical conceptions, the ultimate goal of religious life, the true nature of Buddha etc. Nagarjuna, a contemporary of Kanishka, was the great exponent of Mahayanism. It was this Mahayanism which spread in Central Asia and other parts of the world. Hinayanism was restricted only to India.

*Causes of Spread of Buddhism.* The religion of the Buddha started in one corner of India and spread not only in India, but also made its way to Ceylon, Burma, Tibet, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Champa, China, Japan, Siam and Central Asia. This phenomenal growth of Buddhism was due to many causes.

(1) The first important cause was the simplicity of the teachings of Buddha. Buddha's philosophy of life was a simple code of conduct which did not require the employment of priests and expenditure of money. The whole thing was put in such a simple way that even the most dullard could understand the same. The followers of Buddha had not to bother themselves with any metaphysical questions. There was nothing to create confusion in their minds. The result was that the people who were tired of the complicated rituals of the Brahmanas, welcomed Buddhism.

(2) Not only the philosophy of Buddha was simple, the language employed by him was also simple and familiar to the people. He gave his lectures in the Pali language which could be understood by the people. This must have been a great relief to those who found Vedic Sanskrit tedious.

(3) Buddhism did not believe in any caste system. All were welcomed into its fold. Not only that, they were also to be considered as equals. The Buddhists did not bother about the descent of a person. They cared only for his conduct in life. Such a philosophy must have been welcomed by the Sudras and the Vaishyas who were tired of the supremacy and pride of the Brahmanas.

(4) The practice of Hinduism had been made very expensive by the Brahmanas. A lot of money was required to be spent on the ever-increasing number of rituals to be performed throughout the life of a man. The teachings of Buddha did not involve any expense. A person could be honest and virtuous without spending anything. He could attain Nirvana by regulating his life. There was no necessity of the help of any priest or any intermediary. Obviously, Buddhism was economical and no wonder it was welcomed by the masses.



(5) The personality of Buddha was also responsible for the spread of Buddhism. During his life-time, Buddha travelled very widely and leaving aside the rainy season, he was all the time on the move. During his tours, he spread his teachings among the people. He possessed a magnetic personality and consequently was able to convert a large number of people. Reference may be made in this connection to Bimbisara and Ajatashatru of Magadha. According to Dr. Kenneth Saunders, "When absolute sincerity and universal kindness are blended in one character, men cannot but reverence and adore. It is this which is the main cause of the success of Buddhism and the motive to its missionary activity. One cannot imagine that the little formula which won the first Brahman convert.—'All things have a cause'—could be sufficient foundation for a world conquering religion but the serenity of one who had found emancipation from fear and superstition, and who in it saw the basis of a noble system of ethics—this laid a spell upon men's minds and hearts, and the compassion which sent him out as an evangelist during a long and arduous life gave men a picture of a Divine Love."

(6) The Buddhist Sangha was also responsible for the spread of Buddhism. Both the monks and the nuns co-ordinated their efforts for the spread of Buddhism. They had only one object in life and that was the spread of their faith. They worked from morning till night preaching the gospel of Buddha which alone was the object of their life. They had no family troubles. They had no worry about finances. They could beg when they felt hungry and devote the rest of their time to their faith. Buddha gave the monks and nuns the following advice: "Go ye Bhikkhus and wander for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of the compassion for the world. Let not two of you go to the same way". Every individual monk was entrusted with a particular area and he worked in that area with a missionary zeal to convert the people. In the early stages, the Buddhist monks led a holy life and no wonder people were inspired to follow their example. They had education in their hands. The Buddhist monasteries or Viharas became great centres of education and seekers of learning flocked there and received instruction at the feet of Bhikkhus. One such centre was Nalanda where Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveller, studied for many years.

(7) Royal patronage under Asoka, Kanishka and Harsha also helped the cause of Buddhism. It appears that the only object of Asoka's life was to spread the Law of Piety or Dhamma among not only his own subjects but also in countries outside India. He harnessed all the resources of the state to popularise Buddhism. The whole machinery of the state was employed for that purpose. He went on tours to explain the Dhamma to the people. He also directed the Yuktas, Pradeshikas and Dhamma-Mahamatras to go on tours and spread the Law of Piety among the people. The principles of his Dhamma were engraved on pillars and rocks. Missionaries were sent to foreign countries. In short, all that was humanly possible was done to spread Buddhism. Kanishka and Harsha also did a lot to propagate Buddhism within their territories.



(8) At the outset, Buddhism had no serious rivals. The two great missionary religions, Christianity and Islam, were still to come. The absence of rivals facilitated the task of Buddhism.

(9) Another cause of the success of Buddhism was its adaptability. The Buddha had himself empowered the Buddhist Councils to take important decisions so far as the minor precepts were concerned. Later on, changes were made in Buddhism to suit the new times and new countries. This is amply proved by the growth of Mahayanism. Thus, a Buddhist could believe in the Buddha alone or in Bodhisattvas. He could be an idolater or meat-eater and still continue to be a Buddhist.

*Causes of Decline and Fall of Buddhism.* many causes were responsible for the gradual decline and fall of Buddhism in the land of her birth although it continued to flourish in countries beyond India for centuries. Even today, it has a large number of followers all over the world. However, it has practically disappeared from India.

(1) One important cause of the decline of Buddhism was the decline of the Buddhist Sangha. With the passage of time, the Sangha became the hot-bed of intrigues and corruption. Instead of the Buddhist Viharas serving as places of congregations of the Buddhist monks and nuns for the spread of their faith, they were used for mutual bickerings and quarrels. There was more of mutual fighting than of actual work. The monks and nuns began to lead lives of pleasure and ease. While doing so, they could not claim any superiority over Brahmanical priests and consequently the people lost all respect for them. They could not inspire any confidence and came to be looked down upon. The Mahayanist and Hinayanist priests began to condemn each other openly. Internal dissensions proved to be the ruin of Buddhism. It is true that on the occasions of the Buddhist Councils, efforts were made to bridge the schism, but those efforts failed ultimately.

(2) The revival of Brahmanical Hinduism also gave a setback to the cause of Buddhism. The Gupta rulers were great patrons of Brahmanical religion and consequently did a lot for that religion. The loss of the royal patronage must have weakened Buddhism in India. Moreover, it was felt that the Buddhist principle of Ahimsa was responsible for the misfortunes of the country. Buddhism was not a virile religion and consequently could not serve the needs of the people and the country in those rough times. No wonder, many people gave up their faith in Buddhism.

(3) The new Brahmanism incorporated the best points in Buddhism and was thereby able to appeal to the people. The new Brahmanism "was not a sectarian reaction, but the consequences of a process of assimilation and adoption". The growth of Mahayanism also brought Buddhism nearer Hinduism and thereby facilitated the task of its absorption into Hinduism. Mahayanism used the Sanskrit language for its scriptures. It not only made the Buddha a god but also started his worship.

(4) From the eighth century to twelfth century, most of Northern India was governed by the Rajput princes who took pleasure in fighting and bloodshed. The Buddhist principle of Ahimsa did not appeal to them. They were prepared to help Hinduism which was a martial religion. No wonder, Buddhism practically disappeared from the whole of Northern India. South India also followed the Brahmanical faith and consequently Buddhism did not find any foothold there also.

(5) The Muslim conquest of India gave a death-blow to Buddhism in this country. The Muslims were great iconoclasts and hated those who worshipped images. The Buddhists had no military traditions of martial spirit to resist the attacks of the Muslims. Under the circumstances, many of the Buddhists were slaughtered. Some of them embraced Islam and the others ran away to hill states in the north.

(6) The Buddhist Viharas were full of gold and wealth and no wonder their riches excited the greed of the Muslim invaders. The Viharas became the targets of the Muslims whose main object was to get money.

(7) Another cause of the weakness of Buddhism was the decline of intellectual activity and the development of the Tantric or magic form of Buddhism which was Saivism in disguise. The master or teacher (Guru) who gave the initiation and showed the way to a rapid acquisition of Buddhahood or of worldly advantages is no longer a monk but a Siddha, a magician, a Vajracharya who was often a man of very low character.

However, it is to be observed that very serious efforts are being made to revive Buddhism in India. A lot of work is being done in this connection by the Mahabodhi Society of India which was founded by the late Devamitta Dharmapala of Ceylon. The Vihara of Sarnath has been restored. Along with it, rest houses have been constructed for Buddhist monks and pilgrims. The Sanchi Vihara has also been restored. New Viharas have been built at Saravasti, Kusinara, Calcutta and New Delhi. A Buddhist rest-house has been constructed at Bodh Gaya near the Mahabodhi Temple. The Mahabodhi Society of India has set up a large number of branches in all parts of the country.

*Legacy of Buddhism.* It is true that Buddhism disappeared from the land of its birth but it does not mean that it did not leave any legacy behind.

(1) Buddhism gave us a popular religion without any complicated unintelligible ritual as could be performed only by a priestly class. Buddhism tried to appeal to the masses and succeeded in doing so on account of its simplicity, emotional elements, easy ethical code, the use of the vernacular language in its scriptures, the method of teaching by means of parables and worship in congregation. It introduced a personal element into religion in the form of a known-human Saviour in place of impersonal forces of nature as in the case of the Vedic people and the abstract philosophy of the Upanishads.

(2) Most probably image worship was introduced into India by the Buddhists. It is true that to begin with, merely symbols of Buddha were used, but later on, a large number of images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas were manufactured. The Gandhara country was full of such images and even now a large number of them have been found. Buildings had to be constructed for those images and thus a large number of Viharas came into existence. This image worship was borrowed by the Hindus from the Buddhists and it replaced the old form of worship of the Aryans.

(3) Another contribution of the Buddhists was the monastic system. It is true that even before Buddhism, many Hindus went to the jungles but monastic system as such did not exist before Buddhism. In the Buddhist Order, a separate fraternity of monks was created and they obeyed a common head and lived together under a common code of discipline. It was this monastic system which was partly responsible for the rapid spread of Buddhism in every part of the world. The propagation of the faith did not cost much as the monks did not get any wages.

(4) Buddhism created a vast and varied literature in the spoken language which was meant for the common people and not reserved like a sacred language for a learned priesthood.

(5) The most charming contribution of Buddhism to India was in the field of sculptures and architecture. A large number of sculptures of Buddha and Bodhisattvas have come down to us and are to be found in the various museums located in different parts of India. The number of these sculptures increased in the later Hindu period. Likewise, the Buddhists set the example of dedicating cave-temples and this practice was followed by the Hindus and Jains later on.

(6) Buddhism established an intimate contact between India and foreign countries. It was the greatest gift of India to the outside world. It was an universal movement, a force which the whole of the ancient East was free to accept irrespective of caste and country. The Indian monks and scholars carried the gospel of the Buddha to foreign countries from the third century before Christ onwards and consequently converts of those countries looked up to India as a holy land, the cradle of their faith, a pilgrimage to which was the crowning act of the life of a pious house-holder. India's isolation was broken by Buddhism. Buddhist teachers went out of India to preach their faith and foreign Buddhist pilgrims and students came to India in search of knowledge. Their example was followed by the Hindus who also went outside to spread their culture and civilisation. We have records of Hindu missionaries and colonists settling in various parts of the Far East. There was a fusion of the foreign tribes who came to India with the Indian people. The foreigners who came to India and settled here lost their names and creeds and took over the Hindu names and Hindu faith. Thus, Buddhism contributed very largely to the synthesis which produced the modern Hindu society. The new-comers who came to India retained their un-Hindu names and customs for some

time. Buddhism did not insist on uniformity on these points and was prepared to tolerate them. However, after a few generations, when the Hindu revival began, the descendants of these foreigners were hammered and coaxed into uniformity with the Hindus around them, in name, manner and social practices. The result was a homogeneous population and culture in India. It is to be observed that the earlier rulers of the Kushan Empire in India bear purely Turki names like Kadphises I, Kadphises II, Kanishka and Huvishka. However, after that, we have the Hindu name of Vasudeva. Likewise, the Sakas in the beginning maintained their connection with their far-off homeland. However, after a few generations, the Sakas were completely naturalised in India and absorbed into the Hindu fold. The same can be said about the Hunas who attacked India during the Gupta period. Likewise, the Gurjaras settled down in India and adopted Hindu customs and religion.

(7) We find in India a lot of respect for animal life. The creed of Ahimsa is very popular in this country. The motto of Ahimsa Parmo Dharmah is a familiar one. However, all this can be attributed partly to the influence of Buddhism on Indian thought. Respect for animal life has been taken to extremes in some cases.

(8) It is pointed out that the institutions of the Ramdvara and the Matha (organized brotherhoods of Sadhus) were introduced into the Hindu society as a result of its contact with Buddhism.

(9) The Buddhist Viharas were used for educational purposes.

As Buddhism was intended for the masses, it was in these monasteries that the beginnings of vernacular or Prakrit literature were made which later on developed into an extensive body of literature. Thus, Buddhism helped the growth of a vast literature in the popular language of the people. The political history of India after Buddha shows signs of Buddhist influence. Buddhism changed the course of Indian history by striking a sense of horror of bloodshed and fear into the hearts of kings and princes. It was Buddhism that made Asoka a pacifist. That gave a serious setback to the imperial policy of the monarchs of Magadha. It hindered the territorial expansion of Magadha and even jeopardised the very existence of the Empire. As the army was not employed for a long time, it lost its morale and consequently failed to make a stand when the Bactrian-Greeks invaded the country. The policy of the state under Asoka became more humane and philanthropic and the code of punishment was so revised as to be sympathetic and benevolent. Asoka provided free hospitals for men and beasts alike. It seems that the institution of Pinjrapoles and Gowshalas had its origin in Asoka's hospitals for animals.

(10) Buddhism made a direct appeal to the primary emotions of the people. Its simplicity endeared it to the commonfolk who came to look upon it as the religion of the country. It is contended that Buddhism helped the evolution of an Indian nation and paved the way for a political union of India. According to Havell, "In breaking down the racial barriers of Aryavarta and clearing the



spiritual atmosphere of superstition and priestly obscurantism, it bound together in clear ties of sympathy the whole political organisation of the Aryan pale and thus helped to lay the foundation of the great empire of the Mauryan dynasty".

(11) The Hindus originally were meat-eaters, but as a result of Buddhist influence, they became vegetarians.

### **Buddhism and Jainism**

(1) There is a lot of similarity between the teachings of the Buddha and Mahavira. Both of them belonged to princely families and not to priestly families. Both denied the authority of the Vedas and the necessity of performing sacrifices and rituals. Both taught in the language of the common people, *i.e.*, Prakrit and not in Sanskrit which was the language of the priests. Both of them admitted disciples from all the castes and from both sexes. Both of them were opposed to animal sacrifices. Both made the doctrine of Karma or the cumulative effect of one's actions in former lives as the central point of their teachings. The soul was born again and again on account of its Karma. If by right living and thinking we can get rid of this Karma, the individual attains Nirvana. In order to attain Nirvana, people were to practise purity of thought, word and deed. They were not to take life or steal or commit adultery. They were to avoid lies and covetousness and fault-finding. They were to avoid sensual desires. Both Buddhism and Jainism put stress on right conduct and right knowledge and not on religious, ceremonial and ritual as the way to obtain salvation. Both appealed chiefly to the mercantile classes who were not restricted, like the Brahmans, by caste rules. Both looked upon the world as an evil and favoured the formation of monastic communities who retired to caves on the mountains. They converted those caves into places of dwelling, preaching and worship.

(2) Both of them emphasized the necessity of living a hard life in order to attain Nirvana. However, they differed as to the measure of hard life required for the realisation of their object. It is true that Buddha himself practised austerities to such an extent that his body was reduced to a mere skeleton but he did not preach to his followers too much of penance. He preached moderation in this respect and forbade the undue affliction of the body. However, the followers of Mahavira went to extremes. Mahavira himself tortured his own body. He would throw himself into a ditch and keep lying there for days together without food and water. He did not care for the roughness of weather. Neither the showers of rain nor the heat of the blazing sun troubled him in the least. As a matter of fact, when a new disciple joined the Jain church as a monk, he was required to give a proof of his forbearance by pulling out every hair of his head. Jainism excelled Buddhism in the physical torture of the body.

(3) Both Buddhism and Jainism differed regarding the emphasis to be put on the sanctity of life. It is true that both of them advocated the sanctity of life but in this respect Jainism went ahead of Buddhism. The respect of the Jains for sanctity of life was so great

that they could not tolerate the destruction of life even in the form of insects and germs. The Jains were enjoined not to take their meals after sunset. They were also asked to keep a piece of cloth before their mouths.

(4) Buddhism and Jainism differed as regards their connection with Hinduism. While Buddhism got itself completely cut off from Hinduism and prescribed a new system of life for its followers, the Jains maintained their contact with Hinduism. While only the Buddhist priests administered the needs of the Buddhists, the Jains employed the machinery of the Brahman Purohits. The Jains maintained even the caste-system in their ranks. Out of Buddhism and Jainism, the former was more aggressive than the other. While the Jains did everything mildly, the Buddhists had the fanaticism of rebels and converts. Buddhist kings, by their zeal, forcibly tried to convert the followers of other religions. It was partly on account of this extremism that Buddhism was destroyed in India.

(5) Both the Buddha and Mahavira began to be looked upon in the course of time as something more than mere religious teachers, and were revered as divine beings. Both Buddha and Mahavira founded religious sects rather than new religions. However, while Jainism was confined merely to India, Buddhism had an universal appeal and spread in various parts of Asia.

(6) Both Buddhism and Jainism arose in the territory which was only slightly Aryanised and still less Brahmanized.

(7) Both Brahmanism and Jainism had in common a belief which was to direct religious life on two paths hitherto unforeseeable and to stamp Indian philosophy with a meaning which was to distinguish it from every other philosophy. That was the belief in transmigration.

(8) In both Jainism and Buddhism, ascetic preparation for the understanding which brings salvation, was copied from the Yoga. At the same time, the Sophists facilitated the rise of Buddhism and Jainism.

### *Debt of Buddhism to Hinduism*

(1) It is rightly pointed out that Buddhism was merely a phase of Hinduism. According to Prof. Max Muller, "To my mind, having approached Brahmanism after a study of the ancient religion of India, the religion of the Veda, Buddhism has always seemed to be, not a new religion, but a natural development of the Indian mind in its various manifestations, religious, philosophical, social and political". According to Rhys Davids, "The fact we should never forget is that Gautama was born and brought up and lived and died a Hindu. On the whole, he was regarded by the Hindus of that time as a Hindu. Without the intellectual work of his predecessors, his own work, however original, would have been impossible. He was the greatest and wisest and best of the Hindus and, throughout his career, a characteristic Indian". According to Hopkins, "The founder of Buddhism did not strike out a new system

of morals ; he was not a democrat ; he did not originate a plot to overthrow the Brahmanic priesthood ; he did not invent the order of monks". According to Barth, Buddhism was "a Hindu phenomenon, a natural product, so to speak, of the age and social circle that witnessed its birth". Again, "When we attempt to reconstruct its primitive doctrine and early history, we come upon something so akin to what we meet in the most ancient Upanishads and the legends of Brahmanism that it is not always easy to determine what features belong peculiarly to it". According to Oldenberg, "For hundreds of years before Buddha's time movements were in progress in Indian thought which prepared the way for Buddhism"

(2) It is pointed out that Buddhism borrowed a lot from Brahmanism. The idea of the Samgha of monks is borrowed from Brahmanism. The latter divided the life of an individual into four Ashramas and three of them were based on asceticism. There were two kinds of Brahmacharis : Upakurvana and Naishthika. An Upakurvana Brahmachari was a student for a certain period and a Naishthika was a student for life. A Naishthika could be compared to a Buddhist Bhikshu. The Vanprasthis and Sanyasis were regular ascetics like the Buddhist monks. Most of the rules of Brahmacharya were prescribed for the Buddhist monks. The Brahmacharis and Bhikshus had to beg alms. Gautama and Apastamba described the Vanprastha Ashram as that of a Bhikshu. The idea of Ahimsa is also found in Brahmanical literature where it is provided that a Brahmachari should not walk on land that is ploughed or where crops are growing so that a life may not be destroyed. Likewise, the Parivrajakas of the Hindus were forbidden to travel in the rainy season. A similar rule was laid down for the Buddhist monks. Buddhism put emphasis on the purity of the body and the same was the case with Brahmanism. Buddhism put emphasis on right conduct and Brahmanism also did likewise. According to it, religion was more a matter of conduct than of philosophy. The term Brahmacharya itself means the practice (Charya) of Brahma or Veda. The teacher was called Acharya which means a person who practises the precepts of religion. Brahmanical literature also put more emphasis on right habits than on the mere study of books. The system of fasting was borrowed by Buddhism from Hinduism. The order of nuns had nothing original about itself as even before the time of Buddha, there were such orders in Hinduism.

(3) Buddhism put emphasis on the necessity of removing pain by the elimination of desires. Similar ideas were given by the authors of the Upanishads. According to Yajnavalkya, "Whatever is beside Him is full of sorrow ; as the sun, the eye of the Universe, moves far off and unaffected by all sickness that meets the human eye, so also the One, the Atman, who dwells in all creatures, dwells after and untouched by the sorrows of the world".

(4) According to Max Muller, instead of discarding and denouncing the Brahmanical ideal of life, "Buddhism achieved, in one sense, the full realisation of this Brahmanic ideal". Again, "Buddhist society, as we know it from the sacred writings of the

Buddhists, is far more the fulfilment than the denial of the ancient schemes and dreams of the Brahmanic law-givers". The entire organisation of the Buddhist Sangha was merely a modification of the old ideas as given in the Vedas. Many of the questions raised by Buddha were the same which were already raised by the authors of the Upanishads, the Brahmanas, Sastras, Sutras and Darshanas. It is pointed out that Buddhism was profoundly influenced by the Sankhya Darshana of Kapila. Prof. Jacobi went to the extent of saying that Buddhism was "derived from Sankhya". However, it is pointed out that there are both resemblances and differences between Buddhism and Sankhya philosophy. The resemblances are in the dialectic presentation of Reality, in the doctrine of Evil and Impermanence and the Way of Release by inner discipline without reference to any divine grace or theological principle. The differences between the two systems are that while Sankhya believes in the duality of Purusha and Prakriti, Buddhism believes in their identity. Moreover, Buddhist conceptions of Vedana, Roop, etc. are to be found in Sankhya philosophy.

(5) It is pointed out that the monastic system was one of the greatest contributions of Buddhism. But even before the time of Buddha, there did exist a large number of monastic orders. Two of them were known as the Brahmanas and Samanas. References are made to them in the Indica of Megasthenes, edicts of Asoka, Mahabhasya, Lalita Vistara and the Pitakas. These ascetics left their home and continued to move from one place to another. They practised various kinds of austerities. They entered into various kinds of discussions in defence of their faith. They put on particular kinds of garments. They had their rules of discipline. All that was done by Buddha was merely to welcome them into his own fold. Most of the old things were allowed to continue. The entry of those persons into the Buddhist Sangha did not bring about any revolution in their ways of living. It merely brought about a change in their outlook. It is maintained that the Buddhists were one among other Samana sects of the country. Buddha himself was frequently styled as "the Samana Gotama". His followers were called "the Samanas who follow the son of the Sakya house"

(6) It is rightly pointed out that Buddha himself was a product of the Brahmanical system which prevailed in his own times. When he left his home at the age of 29, he wandered for six years in search of truth. He practised penances under various Brahman Gurus. Even when he actually got enlightenment, he did so by the method of meditation which is so well-known in the philosophy of Yoga of Hinduism.

(7) Buddha himself attached great importance to the Brahmins. He showed them special consideration. It is given in the Lalita-Vistara that a Buddha can be born only as a Brahmin or a Kshatriya and not "in a low family such as that of a Chandala or of a basket-maker or of a chariot-maker or of a Pukkasa". A descendant of the house of the Mallas was welcomed by Ananda and given an interview by Buddha himself on the ground that he was



"a very distinguished and well-known person". There are references which show that if a person was "a certain Brahman", he was given free access to Buddha. Buddha exempted the Brahman ascetics called Jatilas from the probation necessary to their ordination on account of their spiritual progress. Likewise, Buddha accepted invitations from Brahmins without any idea of converting them. Later on, Asoka himself repeated in his edicts that due honour must be shown to the Brahmins.

(8) The Buddhist idea of Nirvana was also anticipated by the Brahmanical writers. Yajnavalkya remarked thus to his wife : "Of truth, O Gargi, he who does not know this imperishable One, though in this world he should distribute alms and practise penance for many a thousand years, thereby wins but finite good". According to Manu, "The Tapas of the Brahman is concentrated study ; of the Kshatriya, protection of the weak ; of the Vaishya, trade and agriculture ; of the Sudra, service of others". Alara, the first teacher of Buddha, proposed to him "a rigorous course of sacred study discoursing on the Supreme Brahman" and a rule of conduct whereby the devotee "cultivating absolute content with any alms from any person, carries out his lonely life, indifferent to all feelings, and satisfied in himself".

#### *Differences between Buddhism and Hinduism*

(1) Hinduisim believes in God, Matter and Soul and considers God as the creator of the universe. Buddhism believes in Matter and Soul and there is no place for God. The spirit of God as creator is simply ignored.

(2) Hinduism considers the Vedas as divine and the Vedic rituals as a necessity for salvation. However, Buddhism denies the authority of the Vedas and has absolutely no faith in the efficacy of the sacrifices or the Yajnas or Samskaras. More emphasis is put on right conduct. Hinduism is a martial religion. Buddhism puts emphasis on Ahimsa. It stands for a policy of peace and not of war.

(3) There is no personal element in Hinduism. However, such a personal element is introduced by Buddhism in the form of Buddha as the Saviour.

(4) Hinduisim puts emphasis on the caste system and considers the same as the bedrock of the whole social system. However, caste system did not find any place in Buddhism. Everybody was welcomed into the Buddhist fold irrespective of his status.

(5) Buddhism is a missionary religion. It aims at converting the entire mankind to the doctrines of Buddha. However, such was not the case with Hinduism. According to Hinduism, prayers could please God. However, according to Buddhists, prayers could not change the law of universe which demanded good deeds to be followed by good results.

*Suggested Readings*

- |                   |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
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## CHAPTER XIV

### CONDITION OF NORTHERN INDIA FROM 6TH TO 4TH CENTURY B.C.

In order to have an idea of the political, social, religious and economic life of the people of Northern India from 6th to 4th century B. C., we have to collect and analyse the information scattered in Buddhist and Jain literature. The Jatakas are particularly very useful in this matter.

*Political Condition.* When Buddha appeared on the scene, there was no paramount power in India. India was a congeries of states whose rulers and heads were fighting among themselves for supremacy. There were not only monarchies but also republics.

Prof. Rhys Davids in his remarkable work "Buddhist India" has given a list of 16 Mahajanpadas or states. Their names were Kasi, Kosala, Anga, Magadha, Vajji, Malla, Chedi, Vamsa (Vatsa), Kuru, Panchala, Machchha (Matsya), Surasena, Assaka, Avanti, Gandhara and Kamboja.

(1) *The Kasis* were the people who had settled round Banaras. Before Buddha, Kasi was more powerful than Kosala and there were frequent disputes between Kasi and Kosala. Brahmadatta, the king of Kasi, attacked Kosala, defeated king Dighiti, annexed it and returned it to the son of the latter. After that started retaliatory invasions of Kasi by Kosala kings named Vanka, Dabbasena and Kamsa. Kasi was conquered by the last-named king of Kosala. It was ultimately incorporated into Kosala.

(2) *Kosala* roughly corresponds to modern Avadh in Uttar Pradesh. Its capital was Saravasti. The Sakyas had already acknowledged in the 7th century B.C. the suzerainty of Kosala. It was the rapid rise of the kingdom of Kosala and the inevitable struggle between Kosala and Magadha which was the leading point in the politics of Buddha's time. In the time of Buddha, Pasenadi (Prasenjit) was the ruler of Kosala. He was educated at Taxila. He was known for his charity. He gave two towns to two Brahmans. His ministers were Mrigadhara, Srivaddha and Digha Charayana. He was an admirer of Buddha. The relations between Buddha and Prasenjit are given in one of Barhut sculptures. This shows that the king was a follower of Buddha. Kosala had three chief cities, viz., Ayodhya, Saketa and Saravasti. There are references to five Rajas of independent clans who were ultimately merged into Kosala. There were wars between Prasenjit and king Ajatasatru of Magadha. After Ajatasatru was captured, he married Vajira, the daughter of Prasenjit. The conflict between the two countries arose out of the resumption by Prasenjit of a village in Kasi which

had been given as bath money to his sister on her marriage with Bimbisara. That gift was revoked by Prasenjit after the death of his sister caused by the assassination of Bimbisara by Ajatasatru. The revocation of the gift led to war between the two countries. In his old age, Prasenjit went to see Buddha in the Sakya country. When he was away, there was a revolution in Kosala and Prasenjit was forced to go to Ajatasatru for help. Unfortunately, he died outside the gates of Rajagriha. There were times of insecurity in Kosala and ultimately Kosala was merged into Magadha.

(3) The state of *Anga* roughly corresponds to the district of Bhagalpur. Its capital was Champa. It was annexed by Magadha in the time of Bimbisara.

(4) *Magadha* roughly corresponds to the present districts of Patna and Gaya. Its earliest capital was Girivraja or Rajagriha. The earliest dynasty of Magadha was founded by Brihadratha. However, Magadha came into prominence under Bimbisara and Ajatasatru. It became so powerful that one by one all other neighbouring states were merged into it. (For details about the rise of Magadha, see the next chapter.)

(5) According to Dr. Rhys Davids, the *Vajjians* included 8 confederated clans of whom the Lichchhavis and the Videhans were the most important. It was in the time of king Janaka that Videha came into prominence. Its capital, Mithila, became the centre of political and cultural activity of Northern India. The last king of Videha was Kalara who perished along with his kingdom and relations on account of his attempt on a Brahman maiden. On the ru of this kingdom arose the republics of the Lichchhavis and the Videhans and six other small republics. Mithila has been identified with the modern town of Janakpur.

The Lichchhavis were very independent people. Their capital was Vaisali. The mother of Mahavira was a Lichchhavi princess. Mahavira himself was born nearabout the city of Vaisali. The Lichchhavis were followers of Buddha and Buddha also visited them on many occasions. Vaisali was a prosperous town, crowded with people, having abundance of everything. There were thousands of many-storeyed buildings. There were many pleasure grounds and lotus ponds. A triple wall encompassed the city, each wall a league distant from the next and there were three gates with watch-towers. The second Buddhist Council was held at Vaisali. The city has been identified with Besarh in the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar.

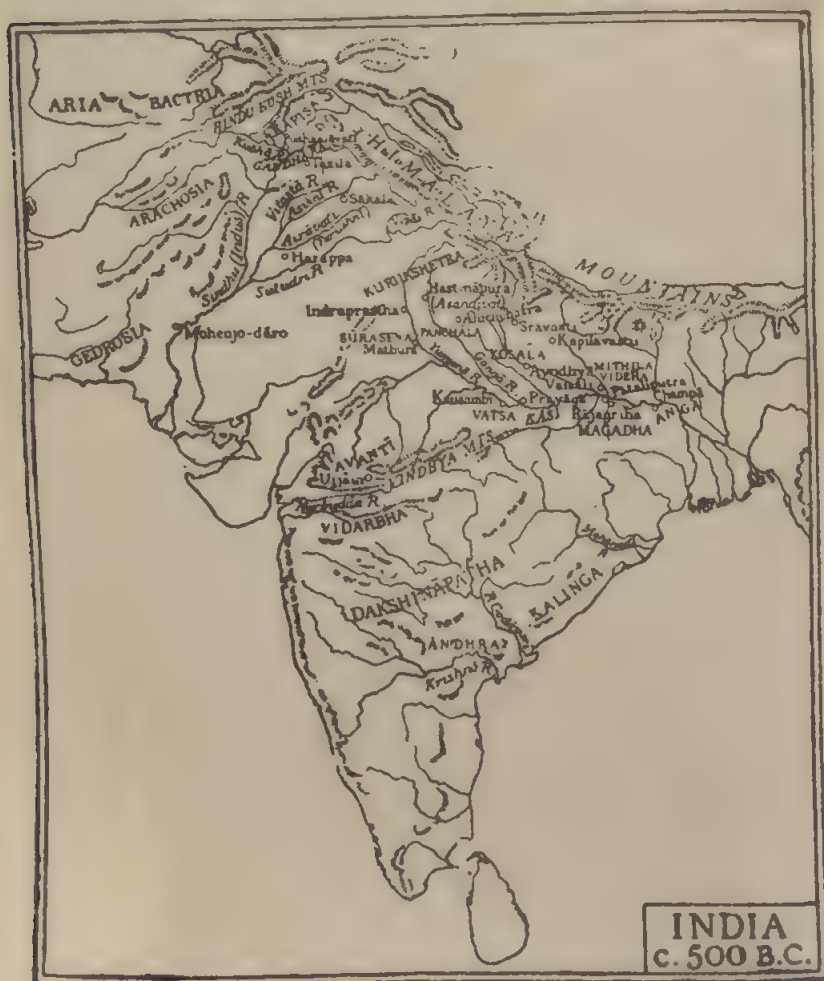
(6) There was a republican state of the *Mallas*. It had two divisions. Kusinara was the capital of one division and Pava of the other. Kusinara has been identified with modern Kasia near Gorakhpur. Pava has been identified with modern Padrauna which is 12 miles north of Kasia. The importance of the cities of Pava and Kusinara is very great in the history of Buddhism. Buddha took his last meals and was taken ill at Pava. At Kusinara, he died. The Mallas were the great admirers of Buddha. They were very brave and war-like people. There are plenty of references to the Mallas in the Buddhist and Jain books.



(7) Chedi roughly corresponds to modern Bundelkhand.

(8) The Vaisa or Vatsa country had a monarchical form of Government. Its capital was Kausambi which has been identified with the village of Kosam, 38 miles from Allahabad. Kausambi was a very prosperous city where a large number of millionaire merchants resided. It was the most important entrepot of goods and passengers from the South and the West.

Udayana was the ruler of this country in the 6th century B.C. He was a powerful and war-like king. His relations with the neighbouring states were not happy. He had to struggle against king Ajatasatru of Magadha and king Pradyota of Avanti. Udayana entered into a matrimonial alliance with the king of Magadha. The ruler of Avanti invaded Kausambi and as he was unsuccessful, he



had to marry his daughter to Udayana. It is not possible to deny the importance of the matrimonial alliances of Udayana. According to Dr. B.C. Law, "Had not Udayana contracted these alliances, Kausambi would have fallen an easy prey to the overgrowing power of Magadha and Avanti". It is stated that Udayana always kept his army on a war-footing and built a large number of forts on the borders of his kingdom. The number of elephants in his army was very large.

Udayana was very fond of hunting. He had kept an extensive forest for that purpose. To begin with, Udayana was opposed to Buddhism, but later on he became a follower of the Buddha and made Buddhism the state religion.

(9) Kuru country roughly corresponded to the modern Union Territory of Delhi and Meerut Districts. The Kurus did not occupy the same position as they did in the Vedic period.

(10) The Panchala country roughly corresponded to the Rohilkhand division. Like the Kurus, the Panchalas also had lost their previous prominent position. Their important cities were Kampilla and Kamany.

(11) Machchha or Matsya country corresponded roughly to the former state of Jaipur in Rajasthan. The Matsyas were to the south of the Kurus and west of the Yamuna.

(12) Surasena country was south of the Matsyas. Its capital was at Mathura.

(13) Assaka country was in the neighbourhood of Avanti. In the time of Buddha, its settlements were on the banks of the river Godavari. Its capital was Patlia.

(14) The state of Avanti roughly corresponded to Malwa. Its capital was Ujjain. The ruler of Avanti in the time of Buddha was Chandapajjota or Pradyota. He was a contemporary of Udayana of Kausambi. He attacked Udayana but was defeated and had to marry his daughter to him. King Pradyota had matrimonial alliances not only with Udayana of Kausambi but also with the Surasenas of Mathura. We are told that king Ajatasatru feared the contemplated attack of Pradyota upon Rajagriha. Although he was given the nickname of Chanda on account of his ferocity, he became a convert to Buddhism. Avanti became a very important centre of Buddhism.

(15) The state of Gandhara roughly corresponded to modern Kashmir and Taxila. Its capital was Taxila which was a famous seat of learning where scholars came from all over the world.

(16) Kamboja was the adjoining country in the extreme North-West with Dwarka as its capital. It has been identified with Rajpura which was described by Hiuen Tsang.

It is true that most of the members of the ruling class came from the Kshatriyas but we have references also to the non-Kshatriya kings. It is stated in a Jataka story that a tyrannical king was replaced by a Brahman king. There were not only monarchies in India at

that time but also republics. Some of the Republican states have been mentioned above. The names of some of them are to be found in the accounts of the Greek writers. It is the republican states of Malloi or Malavas, Oxydrakai or Kshudrakas, the Abastanoi or Ambashthas, etc., who fought against the Greeks. The republican states were known as Ganas and their work was done in an open Assembly Hall called Santhagara. The Assembly or Parliament consisted of the heads of the families belonging to the clan or tribe. It cannot be definitely stated whether the head of every family was given a seat in the Assembly or not. Many republics had hereditary Presidents or Rajans. However, there were other republics whose heads were elected. We are told that the Assembly met very frequently and all the problems of the state were discussed thoroughly in the open sessions. It is possible that the Buddha organized his own Sangha on the lines of the organization of the republics. It is pointed out that there was not much of difference between the executive of a monarchical state or republican state. We are told that the republican state of Vaisali had a Raja, an Upraja and a Senapati. In a monarchical state, there was a Raja and his Council of Ministers including the Purohita and the Senapati. These persons constituted the executive. The normal relations between the various states were those of hostility and rivalry. The heads of the states entered into matrimonial alliances to strengthen their position. References to such matrimonial alliances have already been made above.

The rise of powerful kingdoms created the problem of governing large territories. Ordinarily, the conquered parts were not annexed and were given back to the ruler concerned. However, whenever a nearby territory was conquered and annexed, a Military Chief was appointed to rule over it. Sometimes the princes of the royal family were appointed as governors. It is well-known that Prince Ajatasatru was the governor of Anga during the life-time of his father, Bimbisara.

## Officials

It was impossible for the king to carry on the work of administration all alone. A large number of officers called Mahamatras were appointed to help the king. Those Mahamatras who were in charge of work of general nature were called Sarvarthaka. The Mahamatras in charge of the administration of justice were known as Vyavaharika. The Mahamatras who looked after the army were called Senanayaka. Dronamapakas were in charge of revenue. Rajjughrahakas were in charge of the work of cadastral survey.

## Justice

The king was considered to be the fountain of justice and it was his duty to administer the same. There were different grades of courts and the king himself was the highest court. The procedure was different at different places and it was the duty of a judge to administer justice according to the local custom. Considerations of caste, family and locality played their part in the administration of justice.

## *Army*

As it was the duty of the king to protect the people, he had to keep a strong army. We do not have the exact figures regarding the size of the army during this period. Generally speaking, there were four divisions of the army, *viz.*, elephants, chariots, horses and foot soldiers. The foot soldiers were taken from the ranks of ordinary Aryans and non-Aryans. The other divisions were formed by men of higher ranks. The weapons used in the wars were bows, iron-tipped arrows, spears, swords, etc. We are told that Ajatasatru had a new type of chariot called Rathamusala and a machine to hurl big stones called Mahasilakantaga. Too much reliance was placed on elephants and that made the Indian armies weak before the Greek cavalry.

## *Sources of Revenue*

A lot of money was required for the expenses of the royal household and the administration of the civil and military departments of the Government. As regards the sources of revenue, some money came from the vassal states in the form of tribute. Some money was realised from the tax called Bali. However, the most important source of income was from land. The Bhaga or share of the king of grains produced was one-sixth of the produce and was collected by officials known as Bhagadughas. Gramabhajaka was the village headman and was also the important revenue official. Traders paid octroi duties and other taxes. People also gave gifts to the king. What was called "milk money" was given to the king on the occasion of the birth of an heir to the king.

*Economic Condition.* Most of the people lived in villages and agriculture was their main occupation. The houses of the people were clustered together and round them were the Grama Kshetra or fields for cultivation. The latter were divided into small holdings. There were water-ways and fencings. Large holdings were rare. In addition to the Kshetras which were individual or family properties, there were common pasture lands known as Vana. The number of persons living in a village varied from 30 to 1,000 families.

A family was a comprehensive unit, including not only father, mother, children and grand-parents, but also the wives and children of the sons. The herdsman was known as Gopalak. There were landless labourers and slaves who were employed by others to work in the fields. The share of the king varied from  $1/6$  to  $1/12$  of the produce. This was collected through the village headman who was known as the Gama Bhojaka. The latter was either elected by the village council or was a hereditary officer. The village council consisted of all the elders of the village known as Grama Vriddhas. The village council helped the headman to maintain law and order and also to carry out works of public utility such as the laying of roads, the construction of irrigation channels, the digging of tanks and the construction of mote-halls and rest houses. Life seems to have been very simple in the villages. Every village was practically self-sufficient. It appears that there was not much of crime and people were happy and contented. Everybody took interest in the affairs of the village



and it is stated that even women considered it as an honour to participate in the affairs of the village.

Around the villages, there were woodlands or uncleared jungles haunted by wild beasts. The villagers collected fire-wood from there. Through them also passed the caravan routes that were at times very difficult on account of swamps after rains, dangerous beasts and brigands. Adjoining them were pastures where herds of cattle and flocks of goats were fed.

The arable land of the village lay outside the mountains. Fences and field watchmen guarded the fields from beasts and birds. All the fields were cultivated at the same time. The irrigation channels were laid by the community and the supply of water was regulated under the supervision of the headman. No individual was required to fence his part of the field. There were common fences. Each family took the produce of its share. A shareholder of the land in the village could not sell or mortgage his share of the village field to an outsider.

Rice was the staple food. Mention is also made of other kinds of grains. Sugar-cane, fruits, vegetables and flowers were also cultivated.

As regards arts and crafts, there was considerable efficiency and specialisation. There were three separate industries for the manufacture of bows and arrows, apart from any ornamental work.

Guild (Sreni) system seems to have been in existence. At the head of each Guild was a President. There were many Guilds of workers and their number is usually given as 18. According to Dr. Rhys Davids, the list probably included workers in wood, workers in metal, workers in stone, weavers, leather workers, ivory workers, potters, dyers, fisherfolks, jewellers, hunters and trappers, butchers, cooks and confectioners, barbers and champovers, garland makers and flower sellers, soilors, rush-workers and basket-makers and printers.

There is a reference to the term Setthi which probably means a head merchant. Anathapindikā and Ghosaka, the rich merchants of Saravastī and Kausambi respectively, occupied a premier position among the merchants of their cities. It appears that there were many grades of merchants. This is proved by the use of such terms as Mahasetthis and Anusetthis in the Jatakas.

It appears that partnership was a common thing in trade and industry. It is stated in a Jataka that two merchants entered into a partnership with an equal interest in the stock and trade. Quarrels arose between them as one tried to cheat the other. Ultimately, the two merchants made an equal division and each took one-half. There is another Jataka story in which it is stated that some merchants entered into a partnership and chartered a ship for sea-trade. They engaged a pilot who brought the ship back through the perils of the sea. The merchants divided among themselves all the gold, silver, jewels, corals and diamonds that they had got on the way. There are references where 100 to 500 merchants bought together

goods and sold the same. There are also references to common ships for trading, common goods and the prevention of mutual under-selling.

Brisk trade seems to have been carried on with foreign countries in silk and muslins, cutlery, armour, brooches, rugs, perfumes, ivory, jewellery of gold and silver, ivory works, drugs, etc. It is mentioned in a Jataka story that a Brahman merchant built and fitted a ship laden with merchandise of all kinds to trade with Burma and Siam. There are also references to inland trade routes. Merchants took their goods up and down the great rivers and along the coasts in boats. They also went in big caravans. There are references in the Jatakas to the caravans of Anathapindikā, a merchant of Saravastī.

There are references to a large number of ports and cities in the Jatakas. There was the seaport of Bharukachchha which has been identified with the modern city of Broach. Another seaport of Supparaka has been identified by Dr. B.C. Law with Supara or Sopara in the Thana district of Bombay. There are also references to Kausambi, Sahajati, Ajodhya, Saravastī, Kashi, Mathura and Potana. These cities were great centres of trade and passenger traffic. The other important cities of that time were Taxila, Assapura, Vaisali, Kusinara, Ujjain, Kapilvastu, Mithila, Sakala, Saketa, Champa, Rajagriha etc. The greatness of Pataliputra was yet to come.

The barter system had ceased to exist and the system of standard currency and token coins issued and regulated by the government had not yet arisen. Transactions were carried on, values estimated and bargains were struck in terms of the Kahapana. The latter was a copper coin weighing 140 grains. Its weight and fineness were guaranteed by punch marks made by private individuals. No silver coins were used. The reference to gold coins is doubtful. There was no fixing of the market price by the government. However there is a reference to an official called the "valuer" whose duty was to settle the prices of the goods ordered for the palace.

Besides the coins, there was a considerable use of the instruments of credit. The great merchants in the large towns gave letters of credit on one another. There are references to promissory notes. There is a reference to the charging of interest although the rate is not given. There were no banking facilities. Money was either hoarded in the house or buried in jars in the ground or deposited with a friend. A written record of the transaction was kept. There is no evidence of want in the country. However, the number of those who could be considered to be rich was not large.

The law of primogeniture was not recognized. Property was equally divided among the sons. Custom settled the law of inheritance. Very often, on the death of the house-holder, the family continued as before under the eldest son.

*Social Condition.* Indian society was divided into four castes, viz., the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Sudras.

There are references to the Chandalas and Pukkusas. Castes were an important factor in the social life. Precise rules with regard to marriage, food and even touch governed the mutual relationship of the caste in minutest details. The Brahmans were forbidden to take food from a man belonging to a low caste. The scrupulous care with which the presence of a person belonging to a low caste was avoided is clear from the numerous instances contained in the Jatakas. In the Matanga Jataka, it is stated that a tooth-pick thrown by a Chandala up the river was caught in the tuft of the hair of a Brahmana while he was bathing and consequently the Chandala had to remove his hut from the original place to a place in the down-stream. It is stated in the Chitta-Sambhuta Jataka that two Chandala brothers were almost beaten to death by a mob on the ground that they were deprived of food and drink which was to be given to them by two high class maidens who were coming to visit the temple but who gave up the idea on account of the sight of the Chandala brothers. Although the Buddhists denounced the caste system in theory, they also practised the same themselves. It is stated that the Sakyas refused to marry a full-blooded Sakya princess to king Prasenjit of Kosala.

The Kshatriyas and Brahmans were exempted from taxes which were paid by the middle classes. The Brahmans went through the four Ashramas prescribed by the Hindu law-givers. They were employed by the king for the performance of sacrifices and the prediction of the future. The Kshatriyas were the representatives of political power. They symbolised the idea of the state. They attached great importance to the purity of blood and did not consider any person of pure blood who, through his mother or father, belonged to another caste.

The Vaishyas were better known by the word 'Gahapati.' Chandalas belonged to the most despised class. They were required to live outside the town and were distinguished from the rest of the population by their speech. The Pukkusas were a caste whose profession was probably the plucking of flowers. The Nesadas lived by hunting and fishing. Barbers were despised. The custom of keeping slaves existed. They did not possess any right at all.

It appears that asceticism was very popular at that time. Not only the people who were sick of life on account of old-age left the world, even kings who were in undisputed possession of sovereignty renounced the world. Young princes, trades-men, etc. preferred the life of ascetics. Taxila was the spiritual centre of India.

It appears that women did not occupy the same position as they did in the Vedic period. It is well-known that the Buddha refused to admit women into his Samgha. Even when he was later on prevailed upon to admit them into the Samgha, he laid down certain rules which denied equality to Buddhist nuns with the Buddhist monks. A nun even of 100 years had first to greet a monk. She was to rise up before him, salute him with folded hands and make obeisance even if he had been ordained only then. The utterance of the nuns to the monks was excluded but not the vice-

*versa*. It appears that the Buddha was not happy about the admission of women into the Samgha and this is clear from the following conversation which the Buddha had with his disciple, Anand : "But as women have gone forth, now, Ananda, the religious life will not last long...just as houses, where there are many women and few men, are broken into by burglars, even so, in that doctrine and discipline in which women receive the going forth from a house to houseless life. The religious life will not last long. Just as when the kind of disease called white boned (mildew) falls upon a field of rice, the field of rice will not last long...just as when the disease called crimson falls upon a field of sugarcane, that field will not last long, even so Ananda, in that doctrine and discipline in which women receive the going forth from a house to a houseless life, the religious life will not last long. Just as a man, Ananda, might in anticipation make a dyke for a great reservoir, so that the water should not overflow, even so, Ananda, have I in anticipation prescribed these eight strict rules for the nuns, not to be transgressed while life shall last."

The Greek sources tell us that at Taxila, there was a market where girls were sold. The parents who could not marry their daughters brought them to the market to auction them. The Greeks also refer to another custom. That was the self-immolation of women on the funeral pyres of their husbands.

### *Slavery*

There was also the custom of slavery. Persons who were captured or whose death sentences was commuted, became slaves. People were also made slaves for debts due from them. Criminals were also made slaves. Slaves could be given as gifts. They were also sold. Some people were born slaves and they could not own property. It is true that they could be beaten or treated harshly but generally they were treated with kindness. A slave could get his freedom either by pleasing his master or by making a payment of money to him.

### *Food*

As a result of the influence of Buddhism and Jainism, there was a trend in favour of vegetarianism. The killing of animals was looked down upon. The vegetarian food was becoming popular even among the Kshatriyas. The cow was regarded as sacred and was not killed at all. Instead of killing living animals at the time of sacrifices, their images were placed there. The Greek writers tell us that people in the North-West lived on rice and meat.

### *Dress and Ornaments*

The dress of ordinary persons was made of cotton cloth. Silk garments were used only by the rich. Both men and women were fond of ornaments such as ear-rings, anklets, armlets, bangles, necklaces etc. Various devices were adopted to make the bodies look beautiful. The people used paints, powders etc. for that purpose.

### *Amusements*

The people indulged in various kinds of amusements. Children loved toys. There is a reference to a ball called Kanduka which was



used for playing. Women loved singing, dancing and playing on musical instruments. Hunting and gambling was also popular. Drinking was also prevalent. There are references to animal fights and dramatic shows. There are references to dancing halls being made by kings for the entertainment of the people.

### *Education*

The art of writing was known but there was preference for oral instructions to teaching through books. According to Dr. R.K. Mookerji, "The knowledge of writing might have been expected to introduce a great change in the system of education, but this does not appear to have been the case. There is abundant evidence to show that the teaching continued to be oral and the study of manuscripts was positively condemned." The Brahmans were not in favour of giving the knowledge of the Mantras to all and consequently they discouraged the use of books for that purpose. The personality of Guru or teacher occupied an important place in education. Too much emphasis was put on the development of character. The teachers set the example to be followed by the students. The students lived very hard lives and that hardened their character. Instruction was given in such subjects as sacred and secular literature, logic, philosophy, medicines, military science, economics etc. A Brahman was required to study the Vedas, the Puranas, grammar, astronomy, astrology etc. The Kshatriyas were required to learn the art of war. The Vaishyas and the Sudras were required to learn agriculture, cattle breeding and trade. They were also required to have training in industry. An apprentice was required to live with his teacher in the industrial workshop.

### *Taxila*

Takshashila or Taxila and Kashi were the centres of learning. Taxila was the capital of Gandhara and it was well-known as a seat of learning and ambitious men from all over the country went to Taxila to acquire knowledge. Even princes were sent there for education. According to Dr. A. S. Altekar, "Heir-apparents of Banaras were usually seen being educated at Takshashila in the Jatakas. King Prasenajit of Kosala, a contemporary of Buddha, was educated in the Gandharan capital. Prince Jivaka, an illegitimate son of Bimbisara, spent seven years at Takshashila in learning medicine and surgery. As Panini hailed from Salatura near Attock, he also must have been an alumnus of Takshashila". It is also possible that Chanakya or Kautalya was also associated with Taxila. According to the Jatakas, the three Vedas and 18 arts were taught in the institutions of Taxila. Great emphasis was put on the practical aspects of the subjects. Taxila was famous for the teaching of medicine, law and military science. It appears that as most of the students were poor, they served their teachers during the day time and got instructions at night. However, that did not apply to the children of the rich. The generous and the rich people gave donations to the schools.

*Kashi*

Kashi was another great centre of learning. It is true that there are references to kings of Banaras sending their sons to Taxila for higher studies, but it appears that Kashi also became a centre of learning on account of the efforts of those persons who were educated at Taxila. In the eastern parts of India, the teachers of Kashi became famous and their schools attracted a very large number of students.

*Religious Condition.* It was during this period that new religions of Jainism and Buddhism came into existence. These religions symbolised the revolt of the Kshatriyas against the leadership and dominance of the Brahmanas. The new religions put emphasis on the purity of life and Ahimsa. Brahmanical religion got a set-back at least for the time being.

The Greek writers tell us that people in North-Western India worshipped Indra and Parjanya. New gods like Kumara or Kartikeya were also worshipped. Trees and water deities were also worshipped. The worship of images also became popular. Curtius tells us that the army of Paurava which faced Alexander, carried an image of Herakles. Panini also refers to the sale of the images of Siva, Skanda and Visakha.

There was a lot of emphasis on humanitarianism. Killing of all sorts of things was avoided. Parivrajakas or Sramanas brought new values in the field of religion. The ideas of Samsara and Karma became popular. Efforts were also made in the Brahmanical religion to bring about a synthesis of the different sects. It was asserted that the deities of the Bhagavatas and Pasupatis or Siva-Bhagavatas were the manifestations of the Supreme God of the Brahmanical religion.

In order to meet the challenge from Jainism and Buddhism, an attempt was made to purify and reform the Brahmanical religion. It was in these circumstances that the Bhakti cult became popular. This cult was preached by the devotees of Vasudeva who were known as Vasudevakas or Bhagavatas. This cult was based on the worship of Krishna Vasudeva and it ultimately gave rise to what is called Vaishnavism. It put emphasis on devotion to God.

Vasudeva was the son of Vasudeva and Devaki. He belonged to the Vishnu or Satvata clan of the Yadu tribe living in the region of Mathura. He was a great hero and gradually he was given the rank of a deity. He gave his teachings in the Bhagavadgita or the Song Celestial. These teachings were given to Arjuna by Krishna in the battle-field of Kurukshetra. Arjuna was told that his duty as a Kshatriya was to fight and not to run away from the battlefield. He was to act like a Karmyogi and fight with a detached attitude. His duty was merely to do his Karma and not to worry about the consequences of his actions. Karma was not a means to an end but an end in itself. The soul could never be destroyed. Death was merely the death of the body and not of the soul. The actions of man in this life influenced his next life. An individual could

get Moksha or salvation by surrendering himself to God by his love or devotion. Bhakti and Karmayoga could go hand in hand. A man who practised self-restraint, performed his duties with detachment and gave his devotion to God, could attain Moksha.

Krishna Vasudeva was a disciple of the sage Ghora Angirasa and there is a good deal of similarity between the teachings of Ghora and those given in the Bhagavadgita. According to Ghora, the life of man is a continuous sacrifice. Virtues like charity, piety, non-violence and truthfulness play an important part in the life of a man.

Krishna Vasudeva came to be identified with Vishnu and Narayana. When Vishnu came to be regarded as one of the Hindu Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva), the Bhagavada religion became a very powerful religion. The worshippers of Krishna did not prescribe elaborate ceremonies and sacrifices. They put emphasis only on Bhakti or devotion and self-surrender.

### *Art and Architecture*

According to Dr. A. L. Basham, "With the exception of the walls of Rajagriha, which also have no artistic value, we have no significant architectural remains between the Harappa period and that of the Mauryas. This was due to the fact that few of any buildings were made of stones during this time". Most of the buildings were made of earth, wood and bamboo and no wonder those have been destroyed during the course of time. We are told that Mahagovinda was the architect and planner of Bimbisara. The fortifications of the old city of Rajagriha were made in the time of Bimbisara. We have also the remains of the Buddhist Stupas of that period. One such stupa has been discovered at Piprahwa near the Nepal border.

Statues of Yakshas and Yakshis were made during this period. According to Dr. R. K. Mookerji, "These statues may be taken as some of the earliest examples of indigenous Indian art, of popular or folk art, the art of the masses, whose religion meant the worship of minor deities like the Yakshas or Yakshis, Nagas or Nagis, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Tree and Water spirits and the like".

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
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## CHAPTER XV

### THE RISE OF MAGADHA

Magadha embraces the districts of Patna and Gaya in the southern part of Bihar. It was bounded on the north and the west by the rivers Ganges and Son, on the south by the spurs of the Vindhya and on the east by the river Champa. Its earliest capital was Girivraja or Rajagriha near Rajgir. According to Dr. H.C. Raychaudhuri, the earliest dynastic history of Magadha is shrouded in darkness. We have occasional glimpses of warlords and statesmen, some probably entirely mythical, others having mere appearance of leaders.

According to the Mahabharata and the Puranas, the earliest dynasty of Magadha was founded by Brihadratha. We come across in the Puranas the lists of the kings of this dynasty. This dynasty came to an end in the 6th century B.C.

There is some controversy with regard to the next dynasty which ruled Magadha. According to the Puranas, the Saisunaga dynasty was founded by a king called Sisunaga. He was succeeded by Kakavarna, Kshemadharman, Kshemajit, Bimbisara, Ajatasatru, Darsaka, Udaya or Udasin, Nandivardhan and Mahanandin. According to the Matsya Purana, the Sisunagas ruled for 360 years. Dr. V.A. Smith accepts the chronology of the Sisunagas as given in the Puranas as correct, although he does not accept the duration of their reigns as given in the Puranas.

However, the critics of this view point out that according to Asvaghosha, who is an earlier authority than the Puranas, Bimbisara was a descendant of the Haryanka dynasty and not the Sisunaga dynasty. According to Mahavamsa, Sisunaga himself was the founder of another dynasty which succeeded that of Bimbisara. It is also stated in the Puranas that Sisunaga will take away the glory of the Pradyotas who were the contemporaries of Bimbisara. If the above view of the Vayu Purana is correct, Sisunaga must come after Chand Pradyota Mahasena, who was a contemporary of Bimbisara. It is stated in the Puranas that Vaisali and Varansi were included in the dominion of Sisunaga. These territories were acquired by Bimbisara and Ajatasatru and, consequently, Sisunaga must be placed after them and not before them. Under the circumstances, it is presumed by scholars like Dr. Raychaudhuri, Dr. R.C. Majumdar and R.K. Mookerji that Bimbisara was the founder of the Haryanka dynasty and Sisunaga was the founder of another dynasty which came after that.

#### *The Haryanka dynasty*

There is no definite date regarding the origin of the Haryanka dynasty. Bimbisara was not the founder of the dynasty as it is stated



in the Mahavamsa that he was anointed king by his father when he was 15 years of age. The name of Bimbisara's father was Bhatiya. He is also called Mahapadma by the Tibetans.

### *Bimbisara*

Bimbisara was an ambitious king and he added to the prestige and strength of Magadha by his policy of matrimonial alliances and annexations. One of his queens was the sister of Prasenajit, the ruler of Kosala. She brought with her a village in Kashi yielding a revenue of a hundred thousand for bath and perfume money. Another wife was called Chellana and she was the youngest of the seven daughters of Chetaka, the ruler of Vaisali. According to a Tibetan writer, Bimbisara had another wife called Vasavi. It is stated that she saved the life of her husband by giving him food when the latter was imprisoned by Ajatasatru. She may be the same woman as Chellana. Another wife was probably from the Punjab. Her name was Khema, the daughter of the king of Madda or Madra. The matrimonial alliances must have helped Bimbisara to extend his influence both eastwards and westwards.

Bimbisara had many sons and they gave him a lot of trouble. According to the Jain writers, the sons of Bimbisara were Kunika or Ajatasatru, Halla, Vehalla, Abhaya, Nandisena and Megha Kumara. The first three were the sons of Chellana and the fourth was that of Amrapali, the Lichchavi courtesan. The Buddhist writers refer to Ajatasatru, Vimala, Kondana, Vehalla and Silavat.

The King of Taxila was harassed by his enemies and he asked Bimbisara to help him. Although the ambassador from Taxila was well received, no help was given to the king as Bimbisara was not prepared to alienate other rulers. It is stated that Bimbisara sent his physician Jivak to cure the King of Avanti who was suffering from jaundice. Bimbisara conquered and annexed the kingdom of Anga after defeating Brahmadatta. The conquest of Anga is proved by the evidence of the Digha Nikaya and Mahavagga. According to Hemachandra, the Jaina writer, Anga was governed as a separate province by the Crown prince who had his headquarters at Champa. The conquest of Anga must have added to the material prosperity of Bimbisara. It is stated that Champa was one of the six cities of the Buddhist world. There are references to its gate, walls and a watch tower. Its traders went as far as Suvarnabhumi. The other important towns of Anga were Apana and Assapino.

The territory of Bimbisara included 80,000 villages and covered an area of 300 leagues. A number of republican communities under their Rajakumaras were also included within the territory.

### *Administration.*

Bimbisara had an efficient system of administration and that must have contributed to his success as a ruler. He exercised rigid control over his officers. While he rewarded the efficient, he dismissed those who were inefficient. The Rajabhatas or high officers of Bimbisara were divided into four categories viz. Sambbatthaka or officer in charge of general affairs, Sena-Nayak Mahamattas or

generals, Voharika Mahamattas or judges and Mahamattas who were responsible for the levy of tithes on produce. Rough and ready justice was given to the criminals. The Penal Code was pitiless. Provision was made for the imprisonment of criminals in jails and also their punishment by scourging, branding, beheading, breaking of ribs and cutting the tongue.

The various provinces in the kingdom were given a lot of autonomy. The Crown prince was put in charge of Anga with his headquarters at Champa. There are also references to the Mandalika Rajas. Bimbisara got the help of his sons in the work of administration. Abhaya foiled the machination of King Pradyota. Bimbisara summoned a meeting of 80,000 headmen of his kingdom with a view to put a check on the centrifugal tendencies. Means of communication were improved. A new royal residence was constructed after the burning of Kusagrapura.

### *His Religion*

There is no unanimity of opinion with regard to the religion of Bimbisara and the Jaina and Buddhist writers give different versions. According to the Uttaradhyana Sutra, Bimbisara visited Mahavira, the lion of homeless monks, at Mandikukshi Chaitya and "together with his wives, servants and relations, became a staunch believer in his law." According to Hemachandra, "When the country was under a blight of cold, the king accompanied by Devi Chellana, went to worship Mahavira."

The Buddhist writers refer to two meetings of Bimbisara with the founder of Buddhism. When Bimbisara met for the first time, Gautama had still not got enlightenment. In spite of that, Bimbisara was so much impressed by the personality of Gautama that he offered to make him a chief and also gave him a lot of wealth. The second meeting took place after Gautama had become Buddha. On that occasion, Buddha had a large number of followers along with him. Bimbisara also came to see him with a large number of citizens and Brahmins. Buddha and his followers were entertained at the place and the king served food with his own hands. A park was donated to Buddha and his Samgha. It is also pointed out that Bimbisara appointed his own physician Jivaka as the physician of Buddha and his followers. He remitted the ferry charges for ascetics out of regard for Buddha. The Brahmins also claimed that Bimbisara was a follower of Brahmanism.

### *His Death*

There are different accounts with regard to the death of Bimbisara. According to the Avashyaka Sutra of the Jains, Bimbisara decided to appoint Ajatasatru as his successor in preference to his other sons. However, Ajatasatru became impatient and imprisoned his father where he was looked after by Queen Chellana. Later, Ajatasatru came to know from his mother that his father had loved him very much and on one occasion had sucked his swollen finger streaming with a matter to relieve his pain. Ajatasatru was very sorry for his treatment of his father and ran to break his fetters with

an iron club. However, Bimbisara suspected foul play on the part of his son and committed suicide by taking poison.

It is stated in the Mahavamsa that Bimbisara ruled for 52 years and Dr. R.K. Mookerjee fixes the same from 603 to 551 B.C. According to V.A. Smith, Bimbisara ruled for 28 years from c. 528 B.C. to 554 B.C. (p. 33).

### *Ajatasatru.*

Ajatasatru is stated to have ruled from about 551 to 519 B.C. It was during his reign that the Haryanka dynasty reached its high watermark. Ajatasatru added to the prestige and glory of his dynasty by his conquests.

He had to fight against Kosala. According to the Buddhist tradition, when Bimbisara was murdered by his son, his queen Kosala Devi also died on account of her love for her husband. A village in Kashi had been given to Bimbisara as bath and perfume money for Kosala Devi. After the death of that lady, the king of Kosala decided to take away that village from the murderer. The result was that a war took place between Kosala and Magadha. There were many ups and downs in the war. It is stated that on one occasion the king of Kosala was defeated and he had to run away to his capital. On another occasion, Ajatasatru was defeated and captured. However, the king of Kosala agreed to marry his daughter, Vajra, to Ajatasatru and bestow upon her the village in Kashi for her bath and perfume money. It is further stated that the king of Kosala was ousted from his throne by his commander-in-chief who put prince Vidudabha on the throne. The king of Kosala decided to seek the help of his son-in-law and set out for the capital of Magadha but unfortunately he died outside the gates of the capital of Magadha due to exposure.

Ajatasatru had also to fight against *Vaisali*. It is stated by the Jaina writers that Bimbisara gave to Halla and Vehalla, his two young sons, his elephant called Seyanaga or Sechanaka and a large necklace of 18 strings of jewels. Halla and Vehalla were born from Queen Chellana, the daughter of king Chetaka of Vaisali. When Ajatasatru became king after the death of his father, he asked Halla and Vehalla to return the elephant and the necklace. They refused to do so and Ajatasatru put pressure on Chetaka to hand over Halla and Vehalla to him but he refused to do so. Under the circumstances, war started between Magadha and Vaisali. According to Buddha-ghosha, there was a mine of gems at the foot of a hill near a port on the Ganges. There was an agreement between Ajatasatru and the Lichchhavis that they were to divide the gems equally. However, the Lichchhavis did not keep their promise and took away all the gems. That led to a war between the two countries. It is also stated that Ajatasatru was instigated to start war against the Lichchhavis by his wife Padmavati.

The war against the Lichchhavis was not an easy one and is stated to have lasted for at least 16 years. The Lichchhavis were at the height of their power and prosperity. Buddha's own view



was that the Lichchhavis were invincible because they were observing all those conditions which could bring strength to a republic "such as holding full and frequent assemblies, unity of counsel and policy, maintaining other traditions, institutions, and worship, reverence to elders, honouring women and ascetics". Buddha is stated to have been consulted by Ajatasatru in the matter of the conquest of Vaisali. Vassakara, a minister of Ajatasatru, pretended to have quarrelled with his master and took refuge with the Lichchhavis. After winning over their confidence, he tried to create dissensions among them. This he was able to accomplish within three years and when the attack was made by Ajatasatru, the Lichchhavis were defeated.

It is stated that Ajatasatru was very bitter against the Lichchhavis. He is stated to have remarked thus on one occasion: "I will root out and destroy these Vajjians, mighty and powerful though they may be, and bring them to utter ruin." He made preparations on a large scale. He constructed a new city and fort before starting the war. Thus the foundations of Pataliputra were laid.

It is stated that when Ajatasatru decided to attack Vaisali, Chetaka of Vaisali summoned the 18 Gana Rajas of Kashi and Kosala together with the Lichchhavis and Mallakis and asked them whether the demands of Ajatasatru be accepted or battle be given to him. It appears that all of them advised to offer resistance and actually helped Vaisali. It is stated that Ajatasatru used the Mahasilakantaga and Rathmusala. The Mahasilakantaga was a kind of a catapult which hurled big pieces of stone on the enemy. Regarding the Rathmusala, Hoernle remarks thus: "It seems to have been provided with some kind of self-acting machinery to propel it, as it is described to have moved without horses and driver; though possibly, as in similar contrivances in the Middle Ages, it was moved by a person concealed inside who turned the wheels". Although the war was a prolonged one, Ajatasatru was ultimately the victor. Thus Vaisali was conquered by one of her own sons, Videhi-Putto Ajatasatru.

Ajatasatru had also to fight against *Avanti*. It is stated that king Pradyota of Avanti made preparations to avenge the death of Bimbisara. It is stated in the Majjhima Nikaya that on one occasion Ajatasatru had to fortify his capital as he was afraid of an invasion of Pradyota. It is not clear whether the invasion actually took place or not. However, the fact remains that Ajatasatru was not able to conquer Avanti.

### Religion

According to the Jaina writers, Ajatasatru was devoted to Jainism. It is stated that Ajatasatru visited Mahavira many a time along with his queen and followers. He praised the work of the Jaina monks and declared that the path of true religion had been found by Mahavira alone.

However, the Buddhists also claim that Ajatasatru believed in Buddhism. It is stated that Ajatasatru started as a bitter enemy of Buddha on account of the influence of Devadatta. There was a



change in his attitude towards Buddhism later on. On one occasion Ajatasatru paid a visit to Buddha and expressed remorse for the murder of his father, and asked Buddha to accept his confession of sin. On another occasion, Ajatasatru was persuaded by his physician, Jivak, to see Buddha in a mango grove. Ajatasatru was very much impressed by the discipline among the followers of Buddha. We are told that when Ajatasatru heard of the death of Buddha, he asserted his claim to a share of the relics. According to Mahavamsa, Ajatasatru constructed Dhatuchaityas around Rajgriha. He repaired 18 Mahaviharas. He helped the Buddhist monks to hold their first Buddhist Council under his patronage.

The view of Dr. V.A. Smith was that Ajatasatru, like other Indian kings, did not confine his royal favour to any one particular religion and patronised the followers of various religions at different times.

### *Darsak.*

According to the Puranas, Ajatasatru was succeeded by Darsak and he ruled for 25 years. However, Geiger does not accept this view and he points out that Udayabhadra was the son of Ajatasatru and probably his successor also. On account of the conflicting authorities, it cannot be stated definitely that Darsak was the immediate successor of Ajatasatru on the throne of Magadha. It is possible that he might have been merely a Mandalik Raja.

Udayabhadra, according to Mahavamsa, ruled for 16 years. He is described as the son of Ajatasatru by his wife Padmavati. He is represented in the Buddhist literature as a parricide like his father. It is stated that Udayabhadra founded a new capital on the bank of the river Ganges and it came to be known as Pataliputra. The situation of Pataliputra made it important from the point of view of commerce and strategy.

The king of Avanti was the enemy of Udayabhadra or Udyain. The fall of Anga and Vaisali and the defeat of Kosala left Avanti the only rival of Magadha and consequently there was bound to be rivalry and enmity between the two countries. The war of nerves begun in the time of Ajatasatru must have been continued in the time of Udyain. It was finally decided in the time of Sisunaga.

We are told that Udyain was responsible for the construction of a Chaityagriha or a Jain shrine in the heart of the capital. He also observed fast on 8th and 14th Tithis. On one of those days, a teacher came to his palace to give a discourse. He was accompanied by a novice who murdered the king with his dagger. It is stated that the king of Avanti had a hand in the plot. It is also stated that the king of Ujjain was defeated by Udyain on many occasions.

According to the Puranas, Udyain was succeeded by Nandivardhana and Mahanandin. However, it is stated in the Parisishta-paravam that Udyain left no heir. The Dipavama and the Mahavamsa put Anurudh Munda and Naga Dasaka after Udyain. It is also stated in the Anguttara Nikaya that Munda was the king of Pataliputra.

*Sisunaga or Saisunaga*

It is stated in the Ceylonese chronicles that Sisunaga was an Amatya and was acting as a Governor at Banaras. He was put on the throne of Magadha by the people who revolted against the dynasty of parricides from Ajatasatru to Naga-Dasaka. According to the Puranas, "Placing him on at Banaras he will repair to Girivraja." He had a second royal residence at Vaisali which ultimately became his capital. "That monarch (Sisunaga), not unmindful of his mother's origin, re-established the city of Vesali (Vaisali) and fixed in it the royal residence. From that time Rajagaha (Rajagriha-Girivraja) lost her rank of royal city which she never afterwards recovered."

The most important achievement of Sisunaga was that he destroyed the glory of the Pradyota dynasty of Avanti. The dynasty must have been humbled in the time of king Avantivardhana. The victory of Sisunaga must have been helped by the putting of Aryaka on the throne of Ujjain.

The Puranas seem to be wrong in making Sisunaga a predecessor of Bimbisara and Ajatasatru. It is stated in the Puranas that Sisunaga destroyed the fame of the Pradyotas of Avanti and also started living at Girivraja, after placing his son at Banaras. The hostility between Magadha and Avanti dates from the time of Ajatasatru and not that of Bimbisara. Banaras was conquered by Ajatasatru and was a part of Magadha under Sisunaga. All this fits in properly only if we put Sisunaga after Bimbisara and Ajatasatru and not before them as contended by V.A. Smith on the authority of the Puranas.

According to the Puranas, Sisunaga was succeeded by Kakavarna but according to the *Ceylonese chronicles*, he was succeeded by Kalasoka. It is suggested by Bhandarkar, Jacobi and Geiger that Kakavarna and Kalasoka are one and the same person. According to Asokavadana, Munda was succeeded by Kakavarna. However, there is no mention of Kalasoka in that book.

The second Buddhist Council met at Vaisali in the time of Kalasoka. He also transferred his capital finally to Pataliputra. It is stated in Bana's *Harsha-charita* that Kakavarna was killed by a dagger thrust into his throat in the neighbourhood of his city. It is stated by Curtius that the father of "Agrammes" was a barber who became the lover of the queen. On account of her influence, he was advanced to too near a place in the confidence of the reigning monarch. He treacherously murdered him. Under the pretence of acting as guardian to the royal children, he usurped the supreme authority. Having put the young princes to death, he begot the present king.

Most probably, the successors of Kalasoka were his ten sons who ruled simultaneously. According to the *Mahabodhivamsa*, their names were Bhadrāsena, Korandavarna, Mangura, Sarvanjaha, Jalika, Ubhaka, Sanjaya, Koravya, Nandivardhana and Panchamaka. However, the name of Nandivardhana alone has been mentioned in

the Puranas. Efforts have been made to read his name on a Patna statue and also in the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharvela of Kalinga. However, it is pointed out that there is nothing in the Puranas to show that Nandivardhana had anything to do with Kalinga. The only thing that is stated there is that while the Sisunagas and their predecessors were reigning in Magadha, 32 kings ruled in Kalinga at the same time. "It is not Nandivardhana but Mahapadma Nanda who is said to have brought 'all under his sole sway' and 'uprooted all Kshatriyas'. So we should identify Nandaraja of the Hathigumpha inscription who held possession of Kalinga either with the all-conquering Mahapadma Nanda or one of his sons".

*The Nandas.* The Nandas were the successors of the Saisunaga dynasty. The Puranas refer to 9 Nandas who ruled for 100 years. The 9 Nandas mentioned in the Mahabodhivamsa are Ugrasena, Panduka, Pandugati, Bhutapala, Rashtrapala, Govishanka Dasaisdhaka, Kaivarta and Dhana. While the Mahabodhivamsa call the first Nanda by the name of Ugrasena, the Puranas call him by the name of *Mahapadma* or Mahapadmapati. The Puranas also describe him as a son of the last Kshatrabandhu, king of the preceding line by a Sudra mother. According to the Parisishtaparvan, the first Nanda was the son of a courtesan by a barber.

Mahapadma Nanda has been described in the Puranas as the destroyer of all the Kshatriyas (Sarva Kshatrantaka). He has been described as a second Parsurama or Bhargava and the sole sovereign (Eka-rat) who brought the whole earth under one umbrella of his authority (Eka-chchhatra). He defeated the Ikshavakus, Panchalas, Kasis, Haihayas, Kalingas, Asmakas, Kurus, Maithilas, Surasenas, Vitihotras etc. The Jaina writers also refer to the extensive territory of Mahapadma Nanda. The classical writers also refer to the Prasii (Prachyas) and the Gangaridae as being under one sovereign with their capital at Pataliputra. According to Pliny, the Prasii excelled every other people in India and their capital was at Palibothra or Pataliputra. The Katha-Sarit-Sagara refers to the camp of king Nanda in Ayodhya. There are some inscriptions from Mysore which state that Kuntala was ruled by the Nandas. The Hathigumpha inscription of Kharvela refers to the constructive activity of Nanda Raja in Kalinga and his conquest of some place in that country or the removal of some sacred object. It is possible that Mahapadma was responsible for the conquest of Asmaka and other regions lying further south. It is also possible that his dominion covered a considerable part of the Deccan.

According to Curtius, the first Nanda king was keeping 20,000 cavalry, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 four-horsed chariots and more than 3,000 elephants.

According to the Matsya Purana, Mahapadma Nanda ruled for 88 years. However, the Vayu Purana says that he ruled only for 28 years. According to Taranath, he reigned for 29 years. According to the Ceylonese Chronicles, the Nandas ruled for 22



years. Dr. Raychaudhuri allows only 28 years for the reign of Mahapadma Nanda.

*Dhana Nanda.* According to the Mahabodhivamsa, Dhana Nanda was the last king of Nanda dynasty. It is suggested that he should be identified with the Agrammes or Xandrames of the classical writers. Turnour has given the following information on the basis of the Mahavamsa : "The youngest brother was called Dhana Nanda from his being addicted to hoarding treasure ... He collected riches to the amount of eighty kotis in a rock in the bed of the river (Ganges). Having caused a great excavation to be made, he buried the treasure there. ... Levying taxes, among other articles, even on skins, gums, and stones, he amassed further treasure which he disposed of similarly"

It is stated that Alexander got information regarding the military strength and unpopularity of the last Nanda king. King Poros stated that the king of the Gandaridai was a man of worthless character and was not held in respect. He was considered to be the son of a barber. Plutarch tells us that Androkottos or Chandragupta Maurya had stated that the Nanda king was hated and despised by his subjects on account of the wickedness of his disposition and the meanness of his origin. It is possible that the cause of the unpopularity of the Nandas was their financial extortion.

The Puranas refer to a dynastic revolution by which the Nandas were overthrown by the Mauryas. A detailed account of the same is given in the Mudra Rakshasa. According to the Milinda-Panho, "There was Bhaddasala, the soldier in the service of the royal family of Nanda, and he waged war against king Chandragupta. Now in that war, there were eighty Corpse dances. For they say that when one great Head Holocaust has taken place (by which is meant the slaughter of ten thousand elephants, and a lac of horses and five thousand charioteers, and a hundred kotis of soldiers on foot, then the headless corpses arise and dance in frenzy over the battle-field". This obviously refers to the bloody fight between the Nandas and the Mauryas.

The Puranas refer to the Nandas as irreligious or Adharmikah. It appears that they had their leanings towards Jainism. The Nandas had Jain ministers. It is stated that minister Kalpaka was instrumental in the execution of the programme of the extermination of all the Kshatriya dynasties of the times. The other ministers were his descendants. Sakatala was the minister of the 9th Nanda. It is stated in the Mudra Rakshasa that Chanakya selected a Jain as one of his chief agents. Jain influence is visible in the whole of the drama.

The Nandas are also stated to have possessed a lot of wealth. A reference has already been made to the riches of Dhana Nanda. Aiyengar refers to the wealth of the Nandas in "Beginnings of South Indian History". Hieun Tsang tells us that the Nandas had five treasures. The Katha-Sarit Sagara also says that the Nandas had 990 millions of gold pieces. There are similar references in the accounts of the classical writers.



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## CHAPTER XVI

### INDIA AND PERSIA

Scholars have traced out the relations between India and Persia to very ancient times. After a comparison of the Rigveda and Avesta, it is pointed out that 'not only single words and phrases but even whole stanzas may be transliterated from the dialect of India into the dialect of Iran without change of vocabulary or construction.' The gods Indra, Vayu, Mithra, Naonhathya and Verethraghna of the Avesta are compared to the gods Indra, Vayu, Mitra, Nasatya and Vritraghna respectively of the Vedas. We have passages in the Avesta which can be compared with those in the Vedas. The Vedic god Varun is stated to correspond to the Avestan god Ahura Mazda and Yama to Juma. Some of the references in the Rigveda are stated to refer to Persia or Persian connection in the days gone by. It is stated in the Avesta that Hapt-Hindu (India) was the 15th of the 16 lands created by Ahura. There is also a reference to a mountain called Us-Hindava which may be the Hindukush or the Himalayas.

In the Boghaz Koi inscriptions, a reference is made to certain gods who are considered to correspond to the Rigvedic gods Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the Nasatyas. Letters from Tel-el Amarna refer to some princes with names of Sanskrit form.

Trade and commerce between India and Babylon was carried through the Persian Gulf before the 7th century B.C. There seems to have been a very close relationship between the two countries.

Cyrus I was the founder of the Achaemenian Empire and he ruled from 558 B.C. to 530 B.C. He conquered Bactria, Media, Babylonia and Assyria. He even advanced towards India through Gedrosia (Makran), but was not successful in his expedition. No advance was made during the reign of Cambyses, the son and successor of Cyrus I. Darius was the third ruler of the dynasty. Three of his inscriptions throw light on his relations with India. In the Bahistan rock inscription, Gandhara is mentioned in the list of his subject countries. His Persepolis inscription mentions the Punjab as a part of the Persian Empire. The Punjab is also mentioned in the third inscription. It is clear from the above that the Indus Valley was conquered by Darius. This fact is also supported by Herodotus who states that out of the 20 satrapies of Darius the 20th satrapy (division) was in India. He also states that Indians paid a tribute which was larger than all the rest. The amount was fixed at 360 talents of gold dust which is equivalent to a million pounds sterling. He also tells us that Darius sent a naval expedition. Scylax, a Greek adventurer, was sent to explore the Indus. Scylax equipped his fleet in the province of Gandhara and reached the sea in the 13th

month. Thus, the Indus Valley was annexed by Darius and a fleet was sent to India.

According to Herodotus, Darius maintained a special Indian force which took prominent part in the war between Greece and Persia. The Indian contingent consisted of infantry, cavalry and chariots, and was commanded by a Persian General called Pharnazathres. His chariots were drawn by wild asses. Herodotus was impressed by the cotton dress of the Indian soldiers. The control of Persia over the Indian satrapy seems to have remained intact during the reign of Xerxes. This is amply proved by one of his inscriptions from Persepolis. In that inscription, Gandhara and Sindhu are mentioned as satrapies. It is also proved by the presence of Indian forces in his army employed by him to invade Greece. It is possible that the control of Persia over the above Indian territories continued up to the time of Darius III, who, according to Arrian, employed Indian troops in the battle of Arbela of 330 B.C. against Alexander.

It is possible that by the time of Darius III, the control of Persia over the Indian provinces grew weak and the whole of North-Western India was parcelled out into innumerable kingdoms and republics which were fighting against one another. No wonder, they could not present a united front against Alexander. The Nandas of Magadha did not try to bring those regions under their control.

### *Persian Influence on India*

The contact between India and Persia must have influenced India in many ways. In the first place, Persian coins were current in the Indian dominions. The standard gold coin of Persia was Daric, and the silver Persian coin was called Siglor or Shekels. Both gold and silver coins were imported into India.

The Kharoshti script was introduced by the Persian officials in the North-Western frontier and this continued to be in use till the 4th century A.D. The Kharoshti script was derived from the Aramaic script of Persia.

The pillars of Asoka with bell-shaped abaci and bull or lion capital are of pure Persian origin. The use of winged animals on pillars was borrowed from Persia. The style of the edicts of Asoka also seems to have been borrowed from Persia. An inscription from Takshasila is in Aramaic script and that shows the hold of the Persian language.

The Indian merchants carried their goods to the various parts of the Persian Empire and that added to the commercial prosperity of the country. Indian scholars and philosophers moved freely in the Persian Empire and that led to closer relations with western countries in general and Greece in particular. There is a reference to Indian philosophers putting questions to Socrates.

Persian nobles were employed by Mauryan kings. This is amply proved by the mention of Tushaspa, a Persian, as the Governor of Kathiawar in the reign of Chandragupta Maurya.

Chandragupta Maurya borrowed the hair-washing ceremony from the Persian kings. Likewise, the custom of burning sacred fire

in the room where the meetings of the Council of Ministers were held was probably borrowed from Persia.

Persian women (Yavanis) were employed by Indian rulers as their body-guards, and that must have brought many families from Persia to India in search of livelihood.

The Persians taught the Indians the technique of giving lustrous polish to stone. Hellenistic influence on Indian art was received through Persia.

The example of the Great Empire of Persia must have given birth to the idea of the unification of northern India.

We may conclude with the following observation of V. A. Smith: "The continuance of strong Persian influence upon India is indicated by the prevalence of the Kharoshthi script, a variety of Aramaic, in the provinces near the frontier, by the long continued use of the Persian title of Satrap, by the form of the Asoka inscriptions and by the architecture. Some small particulars which happen to be recorded are sufficient to show that in the time of the first Maurya Emperor, the court was affected by Iranian practices. The Arthashastra rule that the king, when consulting physicians and ascetics, should be seated in the room where the sacred fire has been kept, seems to be an indication that the Persian ritual was honoured at the Mauryan court. We are also told that ceremonial washing of the king's hair was made the occasion of a splendid festival when the courtiers offered rich presents to the king. That observance recalls the Persian hair-washing ceremony on the sovereign's birthday as described by Herodotus."

#### ● *Suggested Readings*

Jairazbhoy, R. A	: Foreign Influence in Ancient India
Rapson	: Cambridge History of India, Vol. I.
Rapson	: Ancient India.
Smith, V. A	: Early History of India.



## CHAPTER XVII

### ALEXANDER'S INVASION OF INDIA

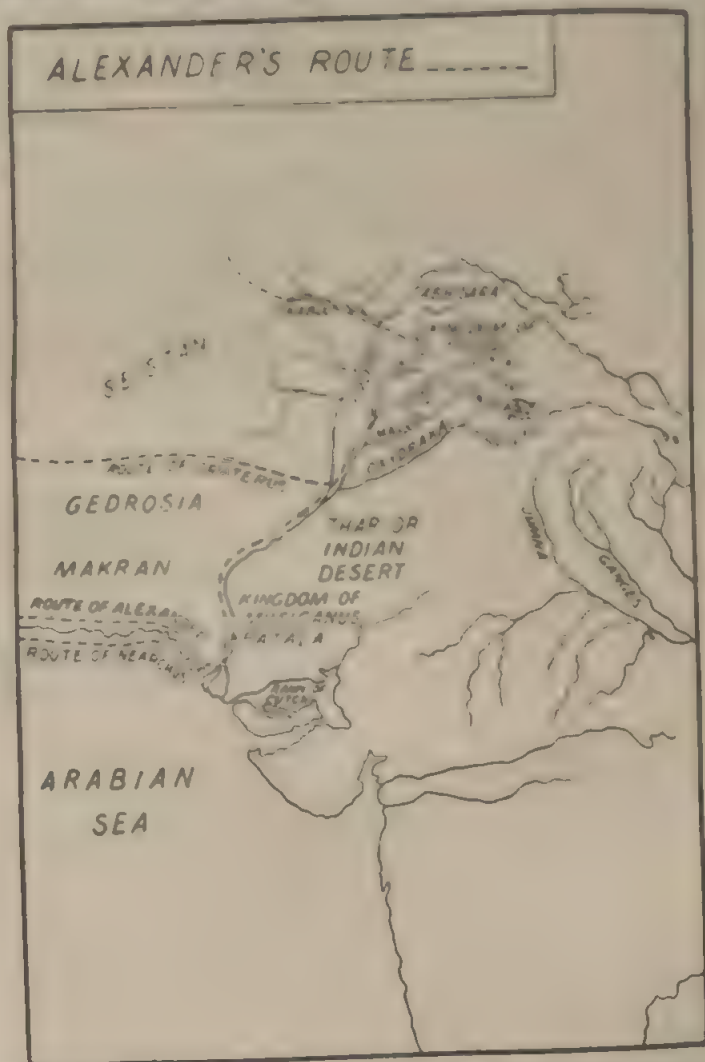
The invasion of Alexander, the Great, is a landmark in the history of India. The date of his invasion is rightly considered to be the sheet-anchor of Indian chronology. It is true that Alexander stayed in India for about 19 months only but his invasion had some very important indirect effects.

Alexander was the son of Philip of Macedonia. He had Aristotle as his tutor but he does not seem to have been impressed very much by his philosophy. He was more interested in the exploits of great heroes like Hercules and Cyrus than in the philosophy of his tutor. When his father died in 335 B.C., Alexander ascended the throne. At that time, he was hardly 20. He was extraordinarily ambitious and would like to become world famous by his conquests. Within 2 years, he collected an army of 30,000 foot soldiers and 5,000 horsemen and in 334 B.C., he set out for the conquest of the Persian Empire. Before starting on this expedition, he had already conquered the neighbouring states and consolidated his position.

*Conquest of Persia.* Between 334 and 330 B.C., Alexander was busy in the Persian wars. Darius Codomannus, King of Persia, was not as strong as his predecessors Darius I and Cyrus were and consequently could not check the advance of Alexander. Without much difficulty, Alexander was able to conquer Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. However, the decisive battle of Persia was fought at Arbela in 331 B.C. Darius was defeated and murdered by one of his own satraps. After that, Alexander captured and destroyed Persepolis, the capital of Persia. Seistan was also occupied by the Greek troops. Alexander founded a new city called Alexandria of the Arachosians which is now known as Qandhar. He also conquered and occupied Afghanistan and Bactria. By 328 B.C., Alexander was able to conquer all the territories of the Persian Empire and modern Afghanistan. He took up the title of "the Great King of Persia".

The ambition of Alexander was not satisfied and he decided to be the master of "*the land of milk and honey*" (India). He divided his army into two parts. One part was kept by him under his own command and the other part was sent under the command of Hephaestion and Perdikkas towards India. He himself undertook the task of conquering and subduing the people of the northern area. Alexander had to fight against the tribal chief who was called Astes (Hasti) by the Greeks. His capital was at *Pushkalavati*. Astes or Hasti stood the Greek siege of his walled town for full 30 days till he fell fighting. The *Asvayanas* and *Asvakayanas* fought the invader to a man and this is clear from the fact that as many as 40,000

of them were taken prisoners. As many as 240,000 oxen fell into the hands of Alexander. The Assakavahas had an army of 10,000 cavalry, 38,000 infantry, 7,000 mercenaries and 30 elephants. They



were all assembled in the fort of *Massaga* which was on the banks of the river *Masakavati*. They were led by their Queen *Cleophis* (*Kripa* ?) and were "resolved to defend their country to the last extremity." So great was the enthusiasm for the defence of the country that even women took part in the fighting. Even the mercenaries preferred "a glorious death to a life with dishonour." After a furious battle, *Massaga* was captured. A large number of

persons were massacred. The *free cities of Aornos, Bazira, Ora or Dyrta* were captured after long sieges. After consolidating his position in hilly territories, Alexander decided to cross the river Indus. A bridge was constructed at *Ohind* which according to Foucher was about 16 miles above Attock. Alexander made sacrifices to the gods on a magnificent scale and gave his army rest for 30 days. At Ohind, Alexander received an embassy from *Ambhi, the ruler of Taxila*. Ambhi made his submission to Alexander and also sent presents to him.

From Ohind, Alexander proceeded towards Taxila. When he was about four or five miles away from Taxila, Ambhi came out of his capital to greet Alexander. While Ambhi recognised Alexander as his overlord, the latter also treated him with a great courtesy and generosity. At Taxila, the *ruler of the Abhisara tribe* sent his representatives and recognised Alexander as his overlord.

*Battle of Hydaspes.* Poros, the King of the Jhelum territory, was asked to submit but he refused to do so. According to Arrian, Poros had 30,000 foot soldiers, 4,000 horsemen, 300 chariots and 200 elephants. The armies of Alexander and Poros faced each other on the opposite banks of the river Jhelum or Hydaspes. Alexander found that it was practically impossible to cross the river in the face of opposition from the enemy. After long delays, Alexander hit upon a plan. A lot of noise was created by soldiers and an attempt was made to impress upon Poros that the Greek soldiers were going to cross the river in front of his army. What was actually done was that the river was crossed about 16 miles above the camp at night. Thus, after having stolen a passage, Alexander made a sudden attack on the army of Poros. Poros was taken by surprise and in spite of his bravery, he was defeated, wounded and taken prisoner. It is stated that when Poros was brought before Alexander and was asked as to how he would like to be treated, his proud reply was that he wanted to be "treated as a king." Alexander was greatly impressed by his personality and treated him generously. His kingdom was returned to him but he recognized Alexander as his overlord. To commemorate his victory, Alexander founded two cities called Boukephala and Nikaia, near the Jhelum river.

Alexander crossed the Chenab or Akesines and subdued the tribes inhabiting the region between the Chenab and the Ravi. Then he crossed the river Ravi to conquer the territories of the *Kathaioi*. The Kathaioi or Kathas "enjoyed the highest reputation for courage." Sangla, their capital, was captured after bitter fighting. As many as 17,000 persons were killed and 70,000 were made captives. The neighbouring cities like *Saubhuti* were struck with terror and submitted without any further resistance.

When the armies of Alexander reached the Beas or Hyphasis, they refused to proceed further. Alexander made a stirring appeal to his soldiers but his words fell on unwilling ears. Ultimately, Koinos, a cavalry general who had led the charge in the battle against Poros, gave the following reply: "From our ranks you sent away home the Thessalians as soon as you saw they had no stomach

for further toils...of the other Greeks some have been settled in the cities founded by you where all of them are not willing residents ; others still share our toils and dangers. They and the Macedonian army have lost some of their numbers in the fields of battle, others have been disabled by wounds ; others have been left behind in different parts of Asia, but the majority have perished by disease. A few only out of many survive and these few possess no longer the same bodily strength as before, while their spirits are still more depressed. You see yourself how many Macedonians and Greeks started with you and how few of us are left." He concluded his oration with the following words : "Moderation in the midst of success, O king ! is the noblest of virtues, for although being at the head of so brave an army, you have naught to dread from mortal foes, yet the visitations of the Deity cannot be foreseen or guarded against by man."

The speech of Koinos was greeted with loud applause and under the circumstances, Alexander gave orders for retreat in 326 B.C. Before retreating, 12 huge altars were built on the river Beas.

#### *Retreat.*

Although Alexander would have liked to conquer the whole of India, he had to retreat from the Beas. It was partly due to the fact that his soldiers had become home-sick. They had left their country many years ago and would like to go back to meet their kiths and kins. The opposition which they met in the Punjab must have given them a foretaste of what was going to come. The Greeks had to fight every inch of the territory in the Punjab. Even the small republican states in the Punjab fought so valiantly that Alexander's troops must have felt that it would be beyond their power to defeat the vast empire of the Nandas under Mahapadma Nanda.

Anyhow, Alexander and his army returned to the Jhelum from the Beas. A lot of time was spent in making preparations for the journey from Jhelum to Sindh. About 2,000 boats of all types were collected. An army of about 120,000 men was to march on both sides of the river. Alexander also divided his possessions into six Satraps. Three Satraps were created west of the Indus and three on east of Indus. The three western Satraps were Greeks and the three eastern Satraps were Indians. Peithon was posted as the Governor of Sindh. Nicanor was put in charge of the province called "India-west-of-the-Indus." It consisted of the lower Kabul Valley and hill tracts upto the Hindukush with its capital at Pushkalavati or Charsada. Philippos was put under Nicanor. Oxyartes was appointed the governor of the province of Paropanisadae or Kabul Valley with its capital at a new city called "Alexandria under the Caucasus." The three Satraps east of the Indus were put under Ambhi, king of Taxila, who ruled from the Indus to the Hydaspes, Poros who ruled from the Hydaspes to the Hyphasis and King of Abhisara country who ruled over the rest of the territory.

When the Greeks reached the lower course of the river Ravi, the *Mollois* and *Oxydrakai* which were republican states inhabiting



Montgomery and Multan districts, began to harass them. It is pointed out that their allied strength was 90,000 foot, 10,000 horse and more than 900 chariots. Even their Brahmans left the pen for the sword and died fighting "with few taken as prisoners." Alexander received a very serious wound and consequently there was an indiscriminate massacre of the people.

When the Greek army reached the basin of the river Indus, there was trouble once again. *Mousikanos*, a powerful chief of that area, refused to offer submission to Alexander, and no wonder the Governor of Sindh had to fight against him and defeat him. The Greek armies continued their march till they reached *Patala*. It was here that Alexander made final arrangements for his departure from India. He sent a major portion of his army under Nearchos by sea. With the rest of his army, he marched for Persia through Baluchistan. In 323 B.C., he reached Babylon near Baghdad where he died at the early age of 33. "Into thirteen years, he had compressed the energies of many life-times."

#### *After Alexander's death.*

It is pointed out that the position of the Greek governors to the west of the Indus became very insecure. First of all, Kandhar raised the standard of revolt. The Asvakayanas killed the Greek Satrap, Nicanor. Commandant Philippos was appointed in place of Nicanor. Philippos was the most experienced Greek administrator in India and no wonder he was appointed to succeed Nicanor. However, he himself was assassinated. According to Arrian, Philippos fell a victim to the jealousy between the Greeks and Macedonians but that was also partly due to the discontentment of the people with foreign rule. The murder of Philippos was really a fatal blow to the Greek rule. Philippos has been described as the pillar of Greek imperialism in India. It is pointed out that when his murder took place in 325 B. C., Alexander was still in a position to come back and set the things right. However, he did not do so. All that he did was that he asked the King of Taxila "to assume the administration of the province previously governed by Philippos until he could send a Satrap to govern it." However, no Satrap was ever sent and the King of Taxila remained in charge of the same. Thus the ruler of Taxila was able to extend his authority beyond the Indus and the frontiers up to the Kabul Valley and the Hindukush. Eudamus was the only Greek agent left in India. He was in charge of the military garrison at Pushkalavati. He was the commander "of the scattered bodies of Greek and Macedonian troops with authority over the various colonists of Hellenic nationality."

When Alexander died in 323 B.C. at Babylon, there was a lot of confusion in his Empire. His generals met and decided to divide the Empire of their master among themselves. The Empire was partitioned for the second time in 321 B.C. On that occasion, no part of India east of the Indus was included as a part of that Empire. Peithon, the Greek Governor of Sindh, was removed and he was put in charge of the province between the Indus and Paropanisadai. Eudamus was the only Greek agent left in India.

He had no official position in the Empire and was completely ignored at the time of partitions. Probably, he set himself up as the leader of the Hellenic "Outlanders" left in the valleys of the Indus and the Hydaspes. However, he also left India in 317 B.C. to help his chief Eumenes against Antigonos, but he met his doom. Peithon left his province and joined the struggle but he also met with a similar fate. He died fighting in the battle of Gaza along with Demetrius. No other Greek was left in India.

### *Causes of Defeat of Indians.*

A question has sometimes been asked as to why the Greeks under Alexander were successful against the Indians. According to V.A. Smith, "The triumphant progress of Alexander from the Himalayas to the sea demonstrated the inherent weakness of the greatest Asiatic armies when confronted with European skill and discipline". However, it is more appropriate to say that in spite of their heroism and bravery, the armies of the small republican states of the Punjab were defeated because they lacked leadership. They had no organisation worth the name. There was no unity of direction. There was no pooling of resources. The result was that the various states were defeated one by one. If instead of fighting at isolated centres, they had presented a united front against their common enemy there is reason to believe that the invaders would have been driven away. This is clear from the fact that when the Indians under Chandragupta Maurya made an effort to drive out the Greeks from India, they were completely successful. It is not just to talk of any inherent defect in the Indian armies.

### *Effects of Alexander's Invasion.*

"The importance of the Indian campaign of Alexander has been both exaggerated and underestimated." There are some writers who believe that India was completely Hellenised as a result of the invasion of Alexander and there are others who hold the view that India was not affected at all. The truth lies midway between the two extreme views.

(1) According to Herr Niese, all the later developments of India depended indirectly upon the institutions of Alexander and Chandragupta Maurya recognised the suzerainty of Seleucus Nikator. This extreme view is not supported by any other writer. According to V.A. Smith, "The campaign (of Alexander), although carefully designed to secure a permanent conquest, was in actual effect no more than a brilliantly successful raid on a gigantic scale, which left upon India no mark save the horrid scars of bloody war. India remained unchanged. The wounds of battle were quickly healed; the ravaged fields smiled again as the patient oxen and no less patient husbandmen resumed their interrupted labours; and the places of the slain myriads were filled by the teeming swarms of a population. India was not Hellenised. She continued to live her life of splendid isolation, and forgot the passing of the Macedonian storm. No Indian author, Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain, makes even the faintest allusion to Alexander or his deeds." Again, "Alexander stayed only nineteen months in India, and, however, far-reaching his plans

may have been, it is manifestly impossible that during those few months of incessant conflict he should have founded Hellenic institutions on a permanent basis, or materially affected the structure of Hindu polity and society. As a matter of fact, he did nothing of the sort, and within two years of his death, with the exception of small garrisons under Eudemos in the Indus Valley, the whole apparatus of Macedonian rule had been swept away. After the year 316 B.C. not a trace of it remained. The only mark of Alexander's direct influence on India is the existence of a few coins modelled in imitation of Greek types which were struck by Saubhuti (Sophytes) the chief of the Salt Range, whom he subdued at the beginning of the voyage down the rivers." (*Early History of India*, p. 117 and pp. 252-3).

(2) According to Dr. R.K. Mookerji, "Alexander's invasion promoted the political unification of the country. Smaller States which handicapped unity were now merged in the larger ones, such as those of Paurava, Abhisara or Taxila. These conditions were favourable for the rise of an Indian Empire to be shortly founded by Chandragupta." (*Hindu Civilization*, pp. 294-5)

(3) According to Dr. R.C. Majumdar, "The voyages and expeditions planned by Alexander widened the geographical horizon of his contemporaries and opened up new lines of communication and new routes for trade and maritime enterprise. The colonies that the conquerors planted in the Indian border-land do not appear to have been altogether wiped out by the Mauryas. Yavana officials continued to serve the great King of Magadha as they had served the great King of Ekbatana and Persepolis, and Yavana adventurers carved out independent kingdoms in the north-west when the sun of Magadha set." (*Advanced History of India*, p. 69).

(4) According to V.A. Smith, Alexander "broke down the wall of separation between West and East, opened up four distinct lines of communication, three by land and one by sea. The land routes which he proved to be practicable were those through Kabul, the Mulla Pass in Baluchistan and Gedrosia. Nearchos demonstrated that the sea voyage round the coast of Makran offered few difficulties to sailors, once the necessary local information had been gained which he lacked." However, according to Havell, the expeditions of Alexander did not lead to the opening of new highways between the East and the West. That work had already been done by the Persians who attacked India even before Alexander and one of the provinces of Persian Empire was in India.

(5) Although the Empire founded by Alexander in India did not last long, it cannot be denied that the Greek settlements of Bactria and Parthia influenced India in many ways. Kanishka invited many Graeco-Bactrian sculptors to Gandhara for making images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas which represent a blending of the Greek and Indian art in image making. The influence of



the Greeks on the Gandhara school of art cannot be denied. Likewise, Greek influence on Indian astronomy has also to be admitted. It was Alexander who "set little bits of Hellas down in the wilds of Western and Central Asia" which later on exercised tremendous influence on India.

According to F. R. Bevan, "The European invasion of India was an event of too great magnitude not to have far-reaching consequences. As other overflowings of foreign conquests have done, it swept away internal barriers which prevented the unification of the lands concerned. The confederacies of free tribes, which had maintained their proud isolation from other political systems, were left utterly broken. Smaller principalities were swallowed up in a realm such as that given by Alexander to the Paurava. This, no doubt, made it a simpler matter for the Maurya king a few years later to take these countries into his great Indian empire.

"The contact of India with the Greek world did not cease with the disruption of Alexander's empire. What can be traced of later political connexions between Indian and Hellenistic kings will be exhibited in another chapter. Any influences which can ultimately be shown to have reached India from the Greek West, whether through the medium of Seleucid or Bactrian kings or of the Roman Empire, which took up the inheritance of Hellenism in Asia, may be regarded as consequences of the work of Alexander. If they were not consequences of the work which Alexander did in India, they were, in any case, consequences of the work which he did when he established Hellenism in Iran, Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt. India indeed and the Greek world only touched each other on their fringes, and there was never a chance of elements of the Hellenistic tradition to strike root in India, as a part of Hellenism struck root in the Nearer East and was still vital in the Muhammedan, largely Hellenistic, culture of the Middle Ages. There are, however, the two unquestionable cases of transmission, which will be noted in subsequent chapters—the artistic types conveyed by the school of Gandhara, and the Greek astronomy which superseded the primitive native system in the later part of the fourth century A. D." (*Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, p. 345*).

There are many reasons why Alexander's invasion did not leave any permanent results. That was partly due to the fact that he met with a premature death at the age of 33. Had he lived longer, there is every possibility of his maintaining his hold over the territory conquered by him in India. He might have come back again to India with fresh troops as was done by Malik Kafur who attacked the Deccan many a time. Moreover, Alexander's stay in India was very short. He did not stay in India for more than nineteen months and during all that period he was busy in fighting. He did not find any time to consolidate his position. The rise of Chandragupta Maurya also hastened the overthrow of the Greeks in the Punjab.



*Suggested Readings*

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Majumdar, R. C.  | : Classical Accounts of India, 1960.             |
| McCrindle, J. W. | : The Invasion of India by Alexander, the Great. |
| Smith, V. A.     | : Early History of India.                        |
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## CHAPTER XVIII

### CHANDRAGUPTA AND BINDUSARA

*Importance of Mauryan Dynasty.* According to Radha Kumud Mookerji, "The foundation of the Mauryan empire is a unique event in Indian History. Its glory is enhanced by the circumstances in which it was achieved. It was achieved against formidable difficulties created by the establishment of a foreign rule in the country as a consequence of Alexander's victorious campaigns in the Punjab during the period of two years, 327-325 B.C." According to Dr. V.A. Smith, "The advent of the Mauryan dynasty marks the passage from darkness to light for the historian. Chronology suddenly becomes definite, almost precise ; a huge empire springs into existence, unifying the innumerable fragments of distracted India ; the kings, who may be described with justice as Emperors, are men of renown, outstanding personalities whose qualities can be discerned, albeit dimly, through the mists of time ; gigantic worldwide religious movements are initiated, of which the effects are still felt ; and the affairs of secluded India are brought into close touch with those of the outer world."

It is rightly pointed out that before the Mauryas the dates in Indian history are controversial. However, with the coming of the Mauryas chronology becomes definite. The synchronism of Chandragupta with Seleucus and his identification with Sandrocottus in Greek literature put Mauryan chronology on a sound footing. Asoka is found to be a contemporary of Antiochos of Syria, grandson of Seleucus. Moreover, we possess abundant material for writing the political, social and religious history of the Mauryas. This material comes from Indian and foreign sources. The account we possess of the Mauryan period is never equalled in richness or detail till we reach the reign of Akbar. The Mauryan system of administration was a modern one. The old system was perfected and the departmental system was brought into existence. The invasions of India by Alexander and Seleucus brought India into intimate contact with the Western world. Men like Megasthenes and Daimachus lived at the Mauryan capital and Asoka also sent missions to foreign countries. National life began to develop in the Mauryan period. A lot was done in this direction by Asoka. Art also made wonderful progress. Oligarchies and republics were uprooted. The barriers between the Aryans and non-Aryans were broken, and there was a culmination of India's social system in the Mauryan period.

*Sources of Mauryan History.* (1) *Kautilya's Arthashastra.* The most important source for writing the history of the Mauryas is Kautilya's Arthashastra. The book is divided into 15 Adhikaranas or sections, and 180 Prakaranas or sub-divisions. It has about 6,000

Slokas. The book was discovered in 1909 and has been ably translated by Shamasastri. The book is more a manual for the administrator than a theoretical work on polity discussing the philosophy and fundamental principles of administration or of political science. It is mainly concerned with the political problems of the government and describes its machinery and functions, both in peace and war.

*Controversy about its authorship.* There has been a great controversy about the date of Arthashastra. According to Shamasastri, Ganapatisastri, N. N. Law, V. A. Smith, Fleet and Jayaswal, Kautilya's Arthashastra was written by the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya. However, according to Winternitz, Jolly, Keith, and Dr. Bhandarkar, the work is of a much later age and was written in the early centuries of the Christian era. It is pointed out that if the work was really written by Kautilya, the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya, there ought to have been some reference in it to the Mauryan Empire and its administrative machinery. There is absolutely no reference in the Arthashastra to the Municipal Boards mentioned by Megasthenes and also the Military Boards. The fact that the views of Kautilya himself are given in the third person also suggests that the real author of the work was different from him. The Arthashastra does not show that its author played a very active part in politics. It is incredible that Chanakya could have written a work of this kind without revealing a personal touch. It is possible that Kautilya compiled a book of political aphorisms which are quoted by the author along with other writers but with more approval. But there is no means of proving that Kautilya in question is the Mauryan Prime Minister.

According to Dr. Jolly, the real author of Kautilya's Arthashastra was a theoretician and not a statesman. He was probably an official in a state of medium size. The book was attributed to Kautilya on account of the myths current regarding that fabulous minister who was looked upon as the master and creator of the law of polity and the author of all the floating wisdom on the subject of Niti. The traditional accounts of Kautilya do not refer to him as the author of any literary composition. His name is not even mentioned by Megasthenes. The description of India as given in Arthashastra does not show that the author lived in the fourth century B.C. Patanjali in his Mahabhashya refers to the Mauryas and the Sabha of Chandragupta, but he does not mention the name of Kautilya. The name of Kautilya is a mere nick-name denoting falsehood and hypocrisy which could hardly have been devised by the Minister of Chandragupta himself. The work is full of pedantic classifications and puerile distinctions, and could not be the work of a statesman.

*Contents of Arthashastra.* As regards the contents of Kautilya's Arthashastra, it gives the opinions of many earlier authors on polity. The author has described in detail the autocratic form of government. He merely makes a passing reference to the Lichchhavis and other republican communities. The free-will of the autocrat was restricted to a certain extent by the customary reverence for Brahmans. The Brahmans were exempted from capital punishment. However, a

Brahman convicted of high treason could be executed by drowning instead of being burnt alive as was the case with other castes. Brahmans convicted of certain other offences could be branded in the face and then either banished or sent to the mines for life. Brahma is and ascetics were exempted from liability to judicial torture for securing a confession.

Kautilya does not believe that permanent peace is possible. According to him, whoever is superior in power shall wage war. Whoever is rising in power may break the agreement of peace. The king who is situated anywhere on the circumference of the conqueror's territory is termed the enemy. When a king of equal power does not like peace then the same amount of vexation as his opponent has received at his hands should be given to him in return. It is power that brings about peace between any two kings as no piece of iron that is not made red-hot will combine with another piece of iron. According to Kautilya, skill in intrigue was a better qualification for kingship than either power or enthusiasm.

The author tells us that nobody was to be trusted and spies were to be employed in every department of the Government and in every class of the population. The author has written a lot on the various types of spies. Cipher writing was used by the spies and carrier pigeons were employed to carry secret information. The intelligence department was controlled by five Institutes of Espionage in which the reports were checked and verified.

According to Kautilya, the calamity of a king is more serious than that of a minister (*Amatya*). The king alone appoints the minister, the domestic priest and servants. He employs superintendents. He applies remedies against troubles. As is the conduct of the king, so is the conduct of the people. A king is the head of the state. He is the government itself (*Raja Rajyamiti*). Government is ultimately resolvable into one ultimate, and that is the king. The king absorbs all the rest of the elements.

Kautilya describes the measures which the king should adopt for winning over the friendly as well as hostile elements within the kingdom. According to him, a specific class of spies called the *Satrinis* should divide themselves into contending parties and carry on disputations in places of pilgrimage, in assemblies, in residences, in corporate bodies and in congregations of people. One spy should praise the king and the other should condemn him.

According to Kautilya, people overcome by anarchy (*Matsya Nyaya Abhibhutam*) selected Manu, the son of the Sun, as their king. They fixed 1/6th of the grain and 1/10th of the merchandise as well as gold to be the share of the king (*Bhaga*). The king alone can promote the security and prosperity of his subjects. Consequently even the hermits living in the forests have to offer the king 1/6th of the grain gleaned by them. The king occupies the position of such gods as Indra and Yama. He who slights the king is visited with divine punishment. The low persons who speak ill of the king should be contradicted. It is the duty of the people to abstain from slighting the king.



Kautilya makes it clear that the king receives the revenue from the people as his fee for the service of protection. According to him, the king is spiritually responsible for the faithful discharge of his functions. He gets the taxes on this definite condition.

The king should avoid injuring women and property of others, and should shun falsehood, haughtiness and other evil tendencies. He should enjoy pleasure without disregarding virtue and wealth. He should enjoy this in equal measure with virtue. The education of the king and his self-control are the first requisite for his successful government.

Kautilya insisted that the king should rule with the help of state officials (Amatyas) and consult ministers (Mantrins). He laid down the qualifications of Amatyas. According to him, four tests were to be employed to find out the fitness of Amatyas. Those tests were fear, virtue, wealth and law. Kautilya emphasized the necessity of civil service in these words : "Sovereignty can be carried on only with assistance. A single wheel does not move ; hence the king should employ the ministers and hear their advice."

As regards composition of the Mantri Parishad or the Council of Ministers, Kautilya gives the views of many other writers on the subject. However, according to him, the size of the Council of Ministers should depend upon the circumstances of the case and the needs of the country.

Kautilya advises the king to avert eight specific kinds of providential visitations, viz., fire, flood, pestilences, famine, rats, snakes, tigers and demons. This list shows that the author shared the popular superstitions of his time. According to Kautilya, the king should help the afflicted as the father does towards his son. He mentions various methods by which the people of criminal tendencies can be entrapped with the help of spies.

Kautilya is called India's Machiavelli on account of his attitude towards religion and morality. We find him frequently advocating rules of grossly unscrupulous nature on the plea of public interest and without the least pretence of moral disapproval.

Kautilya had his own views on punishment. According to him, he who inflicts severe punishment becomes oppressive to all creatures. He who inflicts mild punishment is over-powered. He who inflicts just punishment is respected. Punishment when directed with consideration unites the people with virtue, wealth and desire. When it is mis-applied with greed and anger through ignorance, it irritates even the hermits and the ascetics, not to speak of householders. When punishment is not applied at all, it produces the state of anarchy known as *Matsyanvaya*. In the absence of one who wields the sceptre, the strong man devours the weak, but the weak man being protected by the king prevails upon the strong.

According to Kautilya, the king "shall, therefore, attend personally to the business of gods or heretics or Brahmins learned in the Vedas, of sacred places, of minors, the aged, the afflicted, and

the helpless and of women ; all this in order of enumeration or according to the urgency or pressure, of those works. All urgent calls he shall hear at once, but never put off ; for when postponed, they will prove too hard or impossible to accomplish."

Kautilya refers to 18 departments of administration. Those departments dealt with the following : Revenue, Exchequer, Stores, Armoury, Prisons, Accounts, Agriculture, Mines, Metals, Mint, Salt, Forests, Cattle, Pastures, Passports, Shipping, Ports, Commerce, Trade Routes, Customs, Frontiers, Excise, Weights and Measures, Spinning and Weaving, Religious Institutions, Intelligence, etc.

Kautilya has given rates of salaries to be paid to the various officials. The pay ranged from 48,000 *Panas* a year for the heir-apparent and certain high officials of the state to 60 *Panas* for a labourer. It is suggested that the value of a silver *Panas* was about a shilling.

Kautilya puts great emphasis on finance. To quote him, "All undertakings depend upon finance. Hence, foremost attention shall be paid to the Treasury." The Superintendent of Agriculture was required to assess land at rates varying according to the different methods of irrigation used. All subjects were required to pay occasional benevolences on special occasions, levied at the discretion of the king. Kautilya suggests various methods of getting money to a king who is in need. He advocated the "policy of thinning the rich by exacting excessive revenue (*Karsanam*) or causing them to vomit their accumulated wealth (*Vamanam*)". To quote Kautilya, "Wealthy persons may be requested to give as much of their gold as they can. Those who, of their own accord or with the intention of doing good, offer their wealth to the king shall be honoured with a rank in the court, an umbrella, or a turban, or some ornaments in return for their gold."

Kautilya has advocated the use of torture for extorting confessions. According to him, "Those whose guilt is believed to be true shall be subjected to torture". Kautilya refers to 18 different kinds of torture including seven varieties of whipping. In certain cases, the victim was "subjected to one or all of the above kinds of tortures". The torture of women was supposed to be limited to "half the prescribed standard".

According to Prof. K. A. N. Sastri and Dr Bagchi, "The picture which the Arthasastra presents is that of a paternal government tempered by respect for religion and custom, and limited by the privileges of guilds and corporations. In some respects it was characterised by wise borrowings and adaptations from contemporary foreign models, immediately Hellenistic, but ultimately traceable to the Achaemenid empire of Persia ; but the alien part of the system failed to take root and evidently disappeared with the Mauryan empire. In some of its essentials the Mauryan administrative system, like Mauryan art, was a parenthesis that broke the course of normal development, but both were splendid efforts marked by a great measure of success in their time. Though in some places the Arthasastra advocates methods and expedients repugnant to our ideas

of public morality, its general spirit is enlightened and humane. The welfare of the people claimed the first place in all considerations of policy, and the dominating aim of government was the maintenance of law and order, the punishment of wicked and the protection of the peaceable citizen. Kautilya does not overlook the supreme importance of the presence of an able, energetic and good monarch for the proper functioning of his system; that such monarchs were not forthcoming after Asoka was the tragedy of the Mauryan empire, as of all hereditary monarchies. Kautilya's ideal of good government is best seen in his exhortation to the king to place the happiness of the people above his own personal comfort, and feel that his happiness consists in their well-being.

*Praja-sukhe sukham rajnah prajanam cha hite hitani  
natmapriyam hitam rajnah prajanam tu priyam hitam.*

'The happiness of the subjects is the happiness of the king; their well-being, his. The king's welfare lies not in his own pleasure but in that of the subject'." (*The Mauryas and Satavahanas*, pp. 65-66).

(2) *Indika of Megasthenes.* Another source of information for the Mauryas is the *Indika* of Megasthenes. Megasthenes has left a lot of information regarding the condition of India in his time. It is unfortunate that we do not possess the *Indika* in its original form and only a few extracts taken from here and there by other Greek writers from the *Indika* have come down to us. Diodorus took extracts from Megasthenes for instructing his readers and thus mutilated them and might have left out historical facts which are of great importance to a historian and irksome to the general public. It is contended that the *Indika* of Megasthenes is a compendium of fiction and facts. According to Dr. Jolly, "Megasthenes has arbitrarily assigned the institutions of other countries to India, e.g., seven class system of Egypt and mile-stones of Persia." It is pointed out that Megasthenes did not know any Indian language and was acquainted only with the Panjab and the royal road to Pataliputra. Moreover, he stayed in India for a short period and, therefore, we must be cautious while utilising the information given by him. Being a foreigner, he might not have understood correctly the customs and institutions of the people of India. It is possible that he might have misunderstood the particular names. His ears might have failed to catch them correctly. He might have forgotten the correct spelling or pronunciation when later on he sat down to write his account of India. It is possible that those who quoted him and on whose quotations we have now to depend, might have misquoted him or misrepresented him. In spite of all these shortcomings, the account of Megasthenes gives us a lot of useful information about his contemporary period. According to Dr. V A. Smith, "Although often misled by erroneous information received from others, Megasthenes is a veracious and trustworthy witness concerning matters which came under his personal observation and his vivid account of Chandragupta's civil and military administration may be accepted without hesitation as true and accurate. That account, although preserved in a fragmentary form, is so full and detailed that a modern



reader is more minutely informed in many respects concerning the institutions of Chandragupta than he is about those of any Indian sovereign until the days of Akbar, the contemporary of Queen Elizabeth."

Megasthenes tells us that the king was guarded by a body-guard of women. He was always in fear of his life, and he never slept in the same house even for two consecutive nights. There existed the law of primogeniture for royal succession. The king was very fond of chase which was conducted with great ceremony. He went to the open country for hunting on an elephant. He was attended by armed female guards. The road for the procession of the sovereign was marked off with ropes which it was death to cross. The king had a lot of splendour. The royal palace was considered to excel in splendour and magnificence the palaces of Susa and Ekbatana. Its gilded pillars were adorned with golden vines and silver birds. The buildings were in a park which had many fish ponds and had many kinds of ornamental shrubs and trees. There was a lot of luxury. Basins and goblets of gold, richly carved tables and chairs, vessels of India copper set with precious stones and embroidered robes were to be seen in plenty and contributed to the brilliancy of public ceremonies.

When the king appeared in public on state occasions, he was carried in a golden palanquin, adorned with pearls and was clothed in muslin embroidered with purple and gold. When making short journeys he rode on horseback, but when travelling long journeys he was mounted on an elephant. He was very fond of animals e.g., fights of bulls, rams, elephants and other animals. Gladiatorial contest between men were also common. There were also ox races.

Megasthenes says that the military system of Chandragupta was under the direction of a War Office consisting of 30 members, who were divided into six Boards of five members each. The first Board was concerned with the Admiralty. It was administered in consultation with the Admiral. The second Board was concerned with commissariat. It managed all the affairs relating to military transport. It maintained drummers, grooms, mechanics and grass-cutters. In the words of Megasthenes the duties of this Board were as under: "They arrange for bullock trains which are used for transporting engines of war, food for the soldiers, provender for the cattle and other military requisites. They supply servants who beat the drums and others who carry gongs; grooms also for the horses and mechanists and their assistants. To the sound of gong they send out foragers to bring in grass and by a system of rewards and punishments ensure the work being done with despatch and safety."

The third Board was concerned with infantry. The fourth Board was concerned with cavalry, the fifth Board with war-chariots and the sixth Board with elephants.

As regards the arms of the soldiers, Arrian tells us that "the foot soldiers carry a bow made of equal length with the man who bears it. This they rest upon the ground and pressing against it with their left foot thus discharge the arrow.....and there is nothing



which can resist an Indian archer's shot, neither shield nor breast plate." Every foot soldier was also equipped with a sword about three cubits in length with a broad blade. Horsemen were generally equipped with two lancers and a buckler.

The administration of Pataliputra was in the hands of a Commission consisting of 30 members, divided into six boards or committees of five members each. The first Board was concerned with the superintendence of everything to industrial arts. It fixed the rates of wages. It enforced the use of pure and sound materials. All artisans were protected by the state and capital punishment was inflicted on any person who impaired the efficiency of a craftsman by causing the loss of his hand or of eye.

The second Board was concerned with foreigners. The members of the Board were required to find lodging for foreigners, keep them under observation, escort them within the country and in case of sickness or death to provide for the treatment or burial of the strangers. It was their duty to protect their property and also account for the same.

The third Board was responsible for the systematic registration of births and deaths. The system of registration was enforced for the information of the government and also to help in levying taxes.

The fourth Board was concerned with trade and commerce. It regulated sales and enforced the use of duly stamped weights and measures. Merchants were required to pay a licence tax. He who dealt in more than one trade had to pay double the tax.

The fifth Board was concerned with the supervision of manufactures. The law required that the old goods were to be kept separate from the new goods. The violation of this rule was visited with a fine.

The sixth Board was concerned with the collection of a tithe on sales. Fraud in the payment of this tax was punished with death.

In addition to the special departmental duties mentioned above, all the Municipal Councillors in their collective capacity were required to control all the affairs of the capital city. They were required to keep in order the markets, temples, harbours and all public works.

Megasthenes tells us that the city of Pataliputra was built at the confluence of two rivers, the Ganges and the Son. It had a length of about 9 miles and breadth of about one mile. It was protected by a moat about 60 feet deep and 200 yards wide. The city was protected by a massive timber-palisade, pierced by loopholes through which archers could shoot. It had 64 gates and 570 towers.

According to Megasthenes, the population of India was divided into seven classes. The philosophers belonged to the first class. They were inferior in number but were prominent over all from point of view of dignity. They were exempted from all public duties. There were two categories of philosophers: Brachamanes and Sarmanes.

The term 'Sarmanes' as used by Megasthenes was a general term for all ascetics. Those who were most honoured among them were called Hylobion or forest-dwellers. They "live in the forests on leaves of trees and wild fruits and wear garments made from the bark of the trees. They do not also marry". The Brachmanes lived in ease and security, and were dressed in muslin. They worked as priests. Their wisdom was sometimes utilised by the state. Every year, the king held a conference, and the philosophers were expected to announce their discoveries which could promote public welfare by improving agriculture and livestock. At these conferences the philosophers forewarned the assembled multitude about droughts and weather and also about propitious winds and diseases and other topics. "Thus the people and the sovereign learning beforehand what has to happen always made an adequate provision against a coming deficiency, and never failed to prepare beforehand what will help in time of need." The Sarmanes not only acted as priests but also worked as physicians "effecting cures by regulating diets rather than by the use of medicines. Of medicines they followed those that are applied externally, such as, ointments and plasters rather than drugs"

The second class consisted of husbandmen. They were exempted from fighting and other public services and consequently could devote the whole of their time to tillage. They paid a land tribute to the king because all land in India was the property of the king. No private person was permitted to own land. The husbandmen were also required to pay a fourth part of the produce of the soil to the government.

The third class consisted of the shapherds, and, in general, all herdsmen when neither settled in towns nor in villages but lived in tents.

The fourth class consisted of artisans. Some of them were armourers and some made instruments for peasants, etc. This class received maintenance from the royal exchequer. The armour-makers and ship-builders received wages and food from the king for whom alone they worked.

The fifth class was the military. It was well-organised and equipped for war. It held the second place in point of numbers and gave itself up to idleness and amusement in times of peace. The entire force was maintained at the expense of the king.

The sixth class consisted of overseers. It was their duty to enquire into and superintend all that happened in India. It was to make reports to the king or to the magistrates. The ablest and the most trustworthy persons were appointed to fill up these offices.

The seventh class consisted of Councillors and Assessors. They deliberated on public affairs. This class was the smallest class from the point of view of numbers, but was the most respected on account of high character and wisdom of its members. The king consulted its members. Generals of the army, the Chief Magistrates and Arbiters usually belonged to this class.

Megasthenes tells us that no one was allowed to marry out of his own caste, or exercise a calling except his own. A soldier should not become a husbandman or an artisan or a philosopher.

According to Megasthenes, the Indians did not rear monuments to the dead. They considered the virtues which men had displayed in life and the songs in which their praises were celebrated, sufficient to preserve their memory after death. The Indians lived frugally, especially those in the camp. They disliked indisciplined multitudes and consequently they observed good order. Theft was a rare occurrence. Megasthenes states that those who were in the camp of Chandragupta, wherein lived four lakhs of people, found that thefts committed on any one day did not exceed the value of 200 drachmae, and this was among a people who had no written law.

The Indians were ignorant of the art of writing, and they had to depend upon their memory. Being simple, they lived happily. They never drank except at sacrifices. Their beverage was of liquor got from rice instead of barley. Their principal food was rice pottage.

The buildings in the cities situated on the banks of the rivers or on the sea-coast, were built of wood instead of bricks. Those were meant to last only for a time. Other cities were built of brick and mud.

Megasthenes tells us that the laws of India were very simple. The people seldom went to courts. They had no suits with regard to pledges or deposits. They did not require seals or witnesses. They made their deposits and trusted each other. Their houses and property were generally unprotected and in spite of that there were very few thefts.

The Indians always ate alone. They had no fixed hours for meals and each took his meals whenever he felt inclined. There was no system of taking meals in common. Truth and virtue were held in high esteem by the people. No special privilege was given to the old unless they also possessed superior wisdom. The Indians married many wives. Some of them married to get help-mates and others for pleasure and consequently they filled their houses with children. The robes of the people were worked in gold and ornamented with precious stones. Their garments were made of the finest muslin. Attendants walking behind held up umbrellas over the people. They had high regard for beauty and did their utmost to improve their looks.

The Indians neither put out money at usury nor knew how to borrow. It was contrary to established usage for an Indian either to do or suffer a wrong. They neither made contracts nor required securities.

The king left his palace in times of war and also for the purpose of deciding the cases of the people. He remained busy throughout the whole day. The king also went out for hunting, and offering sacrifices. Megasthenes refers to many Indian rulers. He also tells us that the care of the king's person was given to women who were

bought from their parents. A woman who killed the king when drunk became the wife of the successor.

Megasthenes tells us that some of the officers of the state were in charge of markets, others of the city and still others of the soldiers. Some superintended rivers, measured lands and inspected the sluices by which water was carried from the main canals. They collected taxes from the holders of land, wood-cutters, carpenters, etc. They constructed roads and at every 10 stadia set up a pillar to show the road and the distance. Megasthenes refers to a royal road from the frontier to Pataliputra. This road was under the charge of a special Board.

According to Megasthenes, the metals in India in his time were gold, silver, copper, iron and tin. Megasthenes gives us an interesting story of the gold-digging ants. He also tells us that the staple food of the Indians was wheat and rice. There was abundance of fruits. The means of subsistence were plenty. There were no famines in India. Farmers were prosperous. The riding animals were horses, camels, asses, elephants and tigers. The Indus and the Ganges were the most important river systems. However, there were other rivers also.

Megasthenes tells us that the Indians believed in the theory of transmigration of souls. He also gives the story of the meeting of Alexander with an Indian sage named Mandamis at Taxila. The latter refused to see Alexander. Megasthenes informs us that the friction of limbs was a favourite exercise of the Indians. He also tells us that the Indians were an indigenous race and did not come from outside.

(3) Another source of information for the Mauryan period is the *Mudrarakshas* of Visakhadatta. It is true that this drama was written during the Gupta period, but the author has collected all the information available to him which is not available today. This drama gives us the details of the revolution by which Chandragupta Maurya overthrew the Nandas. We are told that Chandragupta and Kautilya entered into an alliance with the Pauravas against the Nandas. After the defeat of the Nandas, the Paurava Prince was also killed. This drama gives us the details by which the enemies of Chandragupta Maurya were disposed of one by one by Kautilya. From this drama, we get interesting information regarding the social, religious and economic condition of the people. We get an idea of the various types of spies employed by the government. According to Sylvain Lévi, "The author of the *Mudrarakshas* deserves to be compared to Corneille. Both, in bringing politics on to the stage, have had the happily inspired courage to choose the sentiment of admiration as the mainspring of drama."

(4) The inscriptions of Asoka also give us a lot of useful information about the Mauryan period. As a matter of fact, most of our knowledge of Asoka is based on those inscriptions. The Junagadh Rock inscription of Rudradaman also gives us some information regarding the Mauryas. The *Dipavansa* and the *Mahavamsa* (Ceylone Chronicles) also give us a lot of useful information about



the Mauryas in general and Asoka in particular. The account of Deimachos is reliable as he was the Greek Ambassador in the time of Bindusara. We are told that there was correspondence between Bindusara and Antiochos Soter. Ptolemy Philadelphos, the ruler of Egypt, sent his envoy named Dionysios to India in the time of Bindusara or Asoka and his account is also useful. A lot of useful information about the Mauryas has also been brought to light by excavations.

*Rise of Chandragupta.* The Buddhist tradition tells us that the death of Chandragupta's father left his mother destitute and she took shelter at Pataliputra. There she gave birth to a child who was deposited for safety with a cowherd. The latter sold him to a hunter who employed him to tend cattle. It is stated that the boy was always found playing the game (*Rajakrida*) in the village common along with his companions. He also showed that he was giving justice to people in a mock court. When Chanakya passed that way where young Chandragupta was playing the king and administering justice in his court, he was struck by the personality of Chandragupta and he bought him from the hunter. Chanakya took him away to Taxila and gave him all the necessary education. Chandragupta spent his youth at Taxila.

It is stated that Chanakya went to Pataliputra for learning and disputation. There he found Dhanananda reigning. The latter was giving a lot of money in charities through a Danasala with a governing body whose president was to be a Brahman. Chanakya was elected the president of the Danasala, but he was dismissed by Dhanananda on account of his manners and features. That was too much for Chanakya and he took a vow that he would ruin the Nanda dynasty. While he was busy in finding out ways and means to destroy the Nanda dynasty, he came across young Chandragupta as mentioned above.

Justin gives the following account of the rise of Chandragupta : "India after the death of Alexander had shaken, as it were, the yoke of servitude from its neck and put his governors to death. The author of this liberation was Sandrocottus. This man was of humble origin, but was stimulated to aspire to regal power by supernatural encouragement; he, having offended Alexander by his boldness of speech and orders being given to kill him he saved himself by swiftness of foot; and while he was lying asleep, after his fatigue, a lion of great size having come up to him, licked off with his tongue the sweat that was running from him and after gently waking him, left him. Being first prompted by this prodigy to conceive hopes of royal dignity he drew together a band of robbers, and solicited the Indians to support his new sovereignty. Some time after as he was going to war with the generals of Alexander, a wild elephant of great bulk presented itself before him of its own accord and, as if tamed down to gentleness, took him on its back and became his guide in the war and conspicuous in fields of battle. Sandrocottus thus acquired a throne when Seleucus was laying the foundations of his future greatness."

After the death of Alexander in Babylon in 323 B.C., his empire in India could not be held together. There were two partitions of his empire among his Generals, but India was not included as part of that empire. Chandragupta played an important part in the liberation of India from the Greek rule. His plan was first to dispose of what might be called the bad poppies of Greek India, viz., Governors and Generals. The Mahavamsa-tika tells us that Chandragupta collected recruits from different places and organised them into a powerful army, and with their help he was able to turn out the foreigners.

*Overthrow of the Nandas.* When this work was over, Chandragupta started preparations for attack against the Nandas whose rule was oppressive to the people in many ways. We do not have many details of the war between Chandragupta and the Nanda king. It is suggested that Chandragupta "employed Greek mercenaries in his struggle with Nanda." It is stated in the Milindapanho that "100 kotis of soldiers, 10,000 elephants, 1 lakh of horses and 5,000 charioteers" were killed in the battle-field. The Parisishlaparvan tells us that the entire Nanda territory was destroyed. Pataliputra was besieged till the Nanda ruler was forced to surrender. It is stated that Chandragupta spared the life of the Nanda king and allowed him to leave Pataliputra with his two wives and one daughter and as much luggage as he could carry off in a single chariot. Chandragupta is stated to have fallen in love with the daughter of the Nanda king and also married her later on. Mahavamsa-tika differs from the Jain text inasmuch as it states that the Nanda king was killed in the battle-field.

*Defeat of Seleucus.* By his victory over the Nandas, Chandragupta made himself the master of a large empire in which were joined the land of the five rivers of the Punjab and the valleys of the Yamuna and the Ganga. However, he did not keep quiet after that. Ptolemy tells us that "not long afterwards Androcottus, who had by that time mounted the throne, presented Seleucus with 500 elephants and over-ran and subdued the whole of India with an army of 600,000." After the death of Alexander, Seleucus had emerged as the ruler of Babylon. He had conquered Bactria and in about 305 or 304 B.C. he was fired by an ambition to recover the lost conquests of Alexander in India. Taking the route along the Kabul river, he crossed the Indus. His expedition was a failure, and he was forced to enter into a humiliating treaty with Chandragupta Maurya. He had to give to Chandragupta the Satrapies of Arachosia (Kandhar), the Paropamisadae (Kabul) and Gandhara together with portions of Ariana (Herat) and Gedrosia (Baluchistan). Chandragupta sent to Seleucus a valuable present of 500 elephants which stood him in good stead. According to Appian, there was a matrimonial alliance between the two kings as a result of which Seleucus became either the father-in-law or son-in-law of Chandragupta. Seleucus also sent Megasthenes as Ambassador to the Mauryan court, and he must have lived at Pataliputra between 304 and 299 B.C. Dr. V.A. Smith refers to the importance of the treaty in these words: "The first Indian emperor, more than two

thousand years ago, thus entered into possession of that scientific frontier sighed for in vain by his English successors and never held in its entirety even by the Mughal monarchs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."

*Conquest of Western India.* According to Raychaudhuri, there can be no doubt that Chandragupta Maurya pushed his conquest as far as Saurashtra in Western India. There is a reference to Pushyagupta, Chandragupta's Governor in Saurashtra, in the Junagadh Rock Inscription of Rudradaman.

*Conquest of the Deccan.* There is a lot of controversy among scholars with regard to the conquest of the South. There are some who hold that Southern India was conquered by Chandragupta Maurya, and there are others who hold that the same was done by Bindusara. Dr. Raychaudhuri is of the opinion that the Deccan was conquered by the Nandas and was got by Chandragupta Maurya when he defeated the Nandas. To quote him, "The existence on the Godavri of a city called Nau-Nanda Dehra suggests that the Nanda dominions embraced a considerable portion of the Deccan." It is also pointed out that the ancient Tamil literature mentions the Nandas and their fabulous wealth. In some inscriptions from Mysore, the Nanda rule is stated to have extended up to the province of Kuntala in the north of Mysore. The above references prove the conquest of the South by the Nandas. However, it cannot be ruled out that although the South was conquered by the Nandas, it might have been lost by them and the Mauryas had to conquer the same once again. The sovereignty of the Nandas over the south might have been a short-lived one.

Dr. V.A. Smith was of the opinion that the conquest of the Deccan was the work of Bindusara and not of Chandragupta Maurya. His contention was that it was difficult to believe that Chandragupta Maurya could have found time to do more than climb from obscurity to power, expel the Macedonian garrison, repel the attack of Seleucus, effect a revolution and establish a dynasty at Pataliputra, annex a large part of Ariana and extend his dominion from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea. He referred to Taranath according to whom Bindusara slew the kings and ministers of some 16 capitals and extended his empire from sea to sea. Smith also referred to the authority of Mamulanar, an ancient Brahman Tamil poet and scholar, who referred frequently to the invasions by the Mauryas in early times. The invaders advanced as far south as Madura and the neighbouring parts of the Tinnevely District with "a great army".

However, the latest view seems to be that the conquest of the Deccan was the work of Chandragupta Maurya. The Jain tradition associates Chandragupta Maurya with the South. Reference in this connection may be made to Brihat-Katha Kosha by Harishena, Bhadrabahu-Charita by Ratnanand and Rajavali Katha. It is stated in the Rajavali Katha that Chandragupta, the king of Pataliputra, abdicated the throne in favour of his son and followed Bhadrabahu as his disciple to the South. He became his chief



disciple and tended upon him at his death at Sravana Belgola. Chandragupta survived his master for 12 years and ultimately starved himself to death according to the Jain fashion.

It is also pointed out that the conquest of the south could not have been the work of Bindusara. There is not the slightest reference anywhere that Bindusara even went to the South. There is some evidence which shows that Bindusara lacked the qualities of a conqueror. It is pointed out that when there was a revolt in the province of Taxila, he sent his son Asoka to suppress the same and did not go there himself. Had he been a great general or conqueror, he would have taken pride in going there in person. It is also stated by the Greek authors that one of the chief delights of Bindusara was "figs and sweet wine". He is also stated to have taken pleasure in discussion with philosophers. Such a person could not be expected to conquer the South, and no wonder the conquest of the South is attributed to Chandragupta Maurya and not to Bindusara.

*Extent of his Empire.* According to Dr. R. K. Mookerji, "Chandragupta undoubtedly ruled over a vast empire. According to Plutarch, he over-ran and subdued the whole of India with an army of 6 00,000 men and Justin also refers his mastery over the country. This is indirectly supported by other available evidences on the subject...It thus stands to reason that the empire over which Asoka ruled was mostly the creation of his grandfather, Chandragupta." According to Dr. V.A Smith, "Chandragupta's dominions certainly included the country now called Afghanistan, the ancient Ariana, as far as the Hindu Kush range; the Punjab, the territories known as United Provinces, Bihar, and the peninsula of Kathiawar in the far west. Probably they also comprised Bengal. It is safe to affirm that Chandragupta, when his reign terminated about 298 B.C., was master of all India north of the Narbada, as well as of Afghanistan. At present there is no good evidence that his conquests extended into the Deccan, but it is possible that he may have carried his victorious arms across the Narbada. Late traditions in Mysore go so far as to assert the extension of the Nanda dominion to that country."

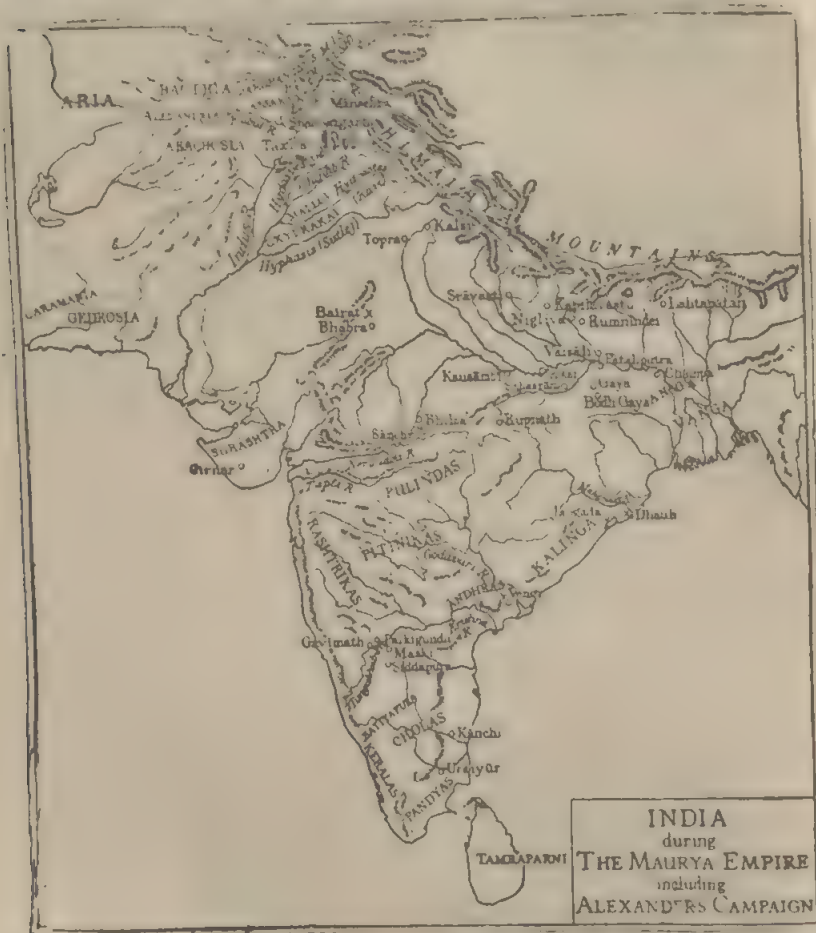
*Estimate.* Chandragupta Maurya was undoubtedly a great ruler. He can rightly be called one of the greatest rulers of ancient India. Dr. V.A. Smith gives his estimate in these words: "In the course of some eighteen years Chandragupta had expelled the Macedonian garrisons from the Panjab and Sind, repulsed and humbled Seleucus the Conqueror, and established himself as undisputed supreme lord of at least all Northern India and a large part of Ariana. These achievements fairly entitle him to rank among the greatest and most successful kings known to history."

*Bindusara (299-275 B. C.).* Chandragupta Maurya was succeeded by his son Bindusara. He has been given the title of 'Amitraghat' or 'Slayer of enemies' by the Greek writers. However, we have no idea of the enemies of Bindusara and the way he defeated them. All that we know about him is that the people of Taxila



revolted twice during the reign of Bindusara. On the first occasion, the revolt was on account of the bad administration of that province by Prince Susima. The revolt was put down by Asoka. The second revolt could not be suppressed on account of the death of Bindusara.

The Greek writers tell us that Bindusara took delight in pleasure. He even requested Antiochos I Soter, king of Syria, to send him some pigs and raisin wine. He also directed him to buy and send a professor. The reply of Antiochos was that he had great delight in sending pigs and raisin wine but he could not send him a professor as it was not lawful for the Greeks to sell a professor.



Ptolemy Philadelphos was a contemporary of Bindusara and ruled in Egypt. He also sent his envoy named Dionysius to India. It cannot be said with certainty whether Dionysius presented his credentials to Bindusara or to Asoka.

During the reign of Bindusara, Demetrius succeeded Megasthenes as ambassador to the court of Bindusara.

The tradition is that Bindusara had a large number of sons. Prince Susima was the eldest son and he was appointed as a Viceroy at Taxila. His second son was Asoka who was put in charge of Uru. It is stated that there was a fratricidal war among the children of Bindusara and a large number of persons were killed. Tarnath tells us that Asoka killed only six of his brothers. However, all this information is rejected on account of the information derived from inscriptions of Asoka. Asoka himself makes reference to his "brothers and sisters and other relatives settled at Patalipatra and other provincial towns".

According to the Puranas, Bindusara ruled for 25 years. However, the Buddhist tradition is that Bindusara ruled for 27 or 28 years.

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Bhargava, P. I.   | : Chandragupta Maurya.                                  |
| Dikshit, V. R. R. | : The Mauryan Polity.                                   |
| McCrindle, J. W.  | : Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian. |
| Mookerji, R. K.   | : Chandragupta Maurya and His Times.                    |
| Shamsastri, R.    | : Kautilya's Arthashastra (Mysore, 1958).               |
| Smith, V. A.      | : Early History of India.                               |
| Stein             | : Megasthenes and Kautilya.                             |

## CHAPTER XIX

### ASOKA (273 B. C.—236 B. C.)

Asoka was a great king not only in the history of India but also of the whole world. We possess a lot of information about him from his inscriptions and Buddhist literature. According to the Buddhist tradition, Bindusara had 16 wives and 101 sons. Sumara, or Susima was the eldest son, Asoka the second and Tishya was the youngest son. In the northern tradition, the name of Asoka's mother is mentioned as Subhadra, but in the southern tradition she is named Dharma. When Asoka was only 18, he was appointed by his father as the Viceroy of Avanti-Rashtra with its capital at Ujjayini. It was there that Asoka married Mahadevi and his son Mahendra and his daughter Sanghamitra were born from her.

We are told that there was a rebellion in Taxila and Asoka was sent to suppress the same. There was another rebellion at Taxila which the Viceroy Susima failed to suppress. It is stated that when Bindusara died, Asoka captured the throne with the help of the Ministry headed by Khallataka or Radhagupta. That led to a war of succession between Asoka and Susima. Yuvaraja Susima was helped by his other 98 brothers excepting Tishya. The story is that Asoka killed all his 99 brothers and waded through blood to the throne and thereby got the notorious title of *Chandasoka*. There are many stories giving details of the cruelty of Asoka before he ultimately ascended the throne. According to Dr. V.A. Smith, "The fact that his (Asoka's) formal consecration or coronation (*Abhisheka*) was delayed for some four years until 269 B. C., confirms the tradition that his succession was contested and it may be true that his rival was his elder brother named Susima." Again, "It is possible that the long delay may have been due to a disputed succession involving large bloodshed, but there is no independent evidence of such a struggle."

While it is conceded that there might have been a struggle for power, it is not admitted that Asoka was responsible for the murder of all of his brothers except Tishya. Dr. Smith regards the story of the slaughter of his brothers as something absurd and false. He points out that even the inscriptions of Asoka prove that his brothers and sisters were alive in the 17th and 18th years of his reign and their households were the objectives of his anxious care. It is pointed out that the Fifth Rock Edict refers only to the family establishment of his brothers as existing. This does not necessarily mean that his brothers themselves were also alive. But there is also nothing to show that his brothers were dead.

It is difficult to settle the controversy regarding the first four years of the reign of Asoka. However, it is certain that Asoka was

consecrated four years after his accession to the throne. According to Dr. Smith, those four years were "one of the dark spaces in the spectrum of Indian history; vague speculation, unchecked by the salutary limitations of verified fact is, at the best, unprofitable".

Asoka took up the title of Devanampiya Piyadasi or beloved of the gods and of amiable appearance. The name Asoka is found in literature and also in the Maski Edict of Asoka and the Junagadh inscription of Radradaman I. The name Dharmasoka is found on the Sarnath inscription of Kumaradevi.

We do not know much about the early years of the reign of Asoka. His personal reminiscences show that he lived the life of his predecessors, consuming flesh food freely enjoying the pleasures of the chase, and encouraging festive assemblies accompanied by dancing and drinking. During his first 13 years, he carried on the traditional policy of expansion within India and friendly relations with foreign powers. He was aggressive at home but pacifist abroad. He exchanged embassies with foreign countries. He employed Yavana officials like Tushaspa. The Divyavadana tells us that Asoka conquered the Svasa (Khasa?) country.

*Kalinga War.* In the 13th year of his reign, he conquered Kalinga. An account of his war and its effects is given by Asoka himself in Rock Edict XIII. To quote him, "Kalinga was conquered by His Sacred and Gracious Majesty when he had been consecrated eight years. 1,50,000 persons were thence carried away captive. 1,00,000 persons were there slain and many times that number died. Directly after the annexation of the Kalingas began His Sacred Majesty's zealous protection of that Law of Piety, his love of that Law and his inculcation of the Law (Dharma). Thus arose His Sacred Majesty's remorse for having conquered the Kalingas, because the conquest of a country previously unconquered involves the slaughter, death and carrying away captive of the people. That is a matter of profound sorrow and regret to his Sacred Majesty." Again, "So that, of all the people who were then slain, done to death, or carried away captive in Kalinga, if the 100th or the 1000th part were now to suffer the same fate, it would be a matter of regret to His Sacred Majesty. Moreover, should anyone do him wrong, that too must be borne with by His Sacred Majesty, so far as it can possibly be borne. Even upon the forest-folk in his dominions, his Sacred Majesty looks kindly and he seeks to make them think aright, for, if he did not, repentance would come upon His Sacred Majesty. They are bidden to turn from evil ways that they be not chastised. For His Sacred Majesty desires that all animated beings should have security, self-control, peace of mind and joyousness."

According to Dr. Raychaudhuri, "The conquest of Kalinga was a great landmark in the history of Magadha and of India. It marks the close of that career of conquest and aggrandisement which was ushered in by Bimbisara's annexation of Anga. It opens a new era—an era of peace, of social progress, of religious propaganda and at the same time of political stagnation and, perhaps, of military inefficiency during which the martial spirit of imperial Magadha was dying out



for want of exercise. The era of military conquest or *Digvijaya* was over, the era of spiritual conquest or *Dhammavijaya* was about to begin." Again, "the Kalinga war opened a new epoch in the history of Magadha and of India. During the first thirteen years of his reign Asoka was a typical Magadhan sovereign—the inheritor of the policy of Sambisara, of Mahapadma and of Chandragupta—conquering peoples, suppressing revolt, annexing territory. After the Kalinga war all this is changed. The older political philosophy which tradition associates with the names of Vassakara and Kautilya gave way to a new statecraft inspired by the teachings of the sage of the Sakyas."

*Asoka's religion.* The Kalinga war had far-reaching effects so far as Asoka was concerned. The change of Asoka's religion can be directly attributed to the Kalinga war. Before his conversion, Shiva seems to have been his favourite deity. This fact is stated by Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangini*. Then Asoka had no scruples about the slaughter of men and animals. Many hundred thousands of living creatures were slaughtered in his kitchen to make currie. But he gave up all this after the Kalinga war and became a Buddhist. In the Bhabru Edict, Asoka openly declares his faith in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Samgha. He called the Buddha as a Bhagavat. He went on a pilgrimage to the holy places associated with the life of Buddha. He declared that whatever had been said by the Buddha was correct. He also showed his belief in the former Buddhas. He took interest in the exposition of Buddhism and kept himself in close contact with the Samgha. He did all that he could to maintain the integrity of the church. He summoned the third Buddhist Council.

It is true that Asoka became a Buddhist but that does not mean that he became the enemy of other religions. Asoka was responsible for the construction and dedication of certain cave dwellings to the Ajivikas. Asoka did not show his hatred for other religions. As a matter of fact, he declared that he who thought in terms of praising his religions by decrying other religions, did the greatest injury to his own religion. He believed in a policy of religious toleration (*Bahu Sruti*). Asoka did not condemn the Devas and the Brahmins. He took pride in calling himself *Devanampiya* or beloved of the gods. He was opposed to any hostility towards the Brahmins. He put his religious policy bluntly in these words: "The king does reverence to men of all sects." However, this does not mean that Asoka was prepared to allow other religions to have complete freedom in doing whatever they pleased. There were certain religious practices which he hated and no wonder he was determined to remove them at any cost. He was opposed to the sacrificial slaughter of living creatures, violence to animate beings and unseemly behaviour to kinsmen and got the same stopped. He was opposed to Samajas or festive gatherings and stopped the same. According to Dr. Smith, Samajas were of two kinds. In one kind of Samaj, the popular festival was accompanied by animal fights, heavy drinking and feasting including the use of meat. This kind of Samaj was stopped by Asoka. The other kind of Samaj consisted of

semi-religious theatrical performances and this was not stopped by him.

The Dhamma or Law of Piety inculcated by Asoka contained the following fundamental principles :

- (1) Samyam or mastery of senses
- (2) Bhavasuddhi or purity of thought
- (3) **Kritajnata or gratitude.**
- (4) Drdhi-Bhakti or steadfastness of devotion
- (5) **Daya or kindness.**
- (6) **Dana or charity.**
- (7) **Saucha or purity.**
- (8) **Satya or truthfulness.**
- (9) **Sushrusa or service.**
- (10) **Samprittipatti or support.**
- (11) **Apichiti or reverence.**

A few references from his inscriptions can give us a clear idea of the religion propagated by Asoka. In the Second Minor Rock Edict, it is stated thus : "Father and mother must be obeyed ; similarly, respect for living creatures must be enforced ; truth must be spoken. These are the virtues of the Law of Piety which must be practised. Similarly, the teacher must be revered by the pupil, and proper courtesy must be shown to relatives. This is the ancient standard of piety, this leads to length of days, and according to this men must act." In Edict VII, Asoka put stress on mastery over the senses, purity of mind, gratitude and steady devotion. In Edict XIII, he laid down the following : "Hearkening to superiors, hearkening to father and mother, hearkening to teachers (or elders), and proper treatment of friends, acquaintances, comrades, relatives, slaves and servants, with steadfastness of devotion." In the Second Pillar Edict, Asoka declared that "Dhamma consisted in little impiety, many good deeds, compassion, liberality, truthfulness and purity."

*Measures for spread of Buddhism.* For the spread of Buddhism, Asoka adopted many measures. He himself went on tours of the country to preach Buddhism to the people. He gave up *Vihara Yatras* or tours of pleasure and went on *Dharma Yatras*. He rightly declared that his policy was one of Dhamma. Vijaya and Dhamma-Ghosha. He directed his officers like the Yuktas, Rajukas, Purushas and Pradeshikas to go on tours and preach his Law of Piety to the people in addition to their official duties.

Asoka was responsible for calling the third Buddhist Council to expound the Buddhist doctrines. He sent missionaries to the various parts of the world. Majjhantika was sent to Kashmir and Gandhara, Maharakshita to Yavana or Greek country, Majjhima to Himalaya country, Dharmikshita (a Yavana) to Aparantaka, Mahadharma to Maharashtra, Mahadeva to Mahishamandala or

Mysore or Mandhata, Rakshita to Varanasi or North Kanara, Sona and Uttara to Suvarnabhumi or Pegu and Moulmein and Mahendra with Rishtriya, Uttriya, Sambala and Bhadrāsara to Lanka or Ceylon. He also sent missions to Egypt, Macedonia, Cyrene and Epirus. It was as a result of those missions that Tissa, the ruler of Ceylon, was converted to Buddhism and his whole country embraced Buddhism. We have a lot of information about the conversion of the people of Ceylon to Buddhism in the Mahāvamsa.

For the spread of Buddhism, Asoka appointed certain officers, namely, Dharma-mahamatras and Dharmayutas. The duties of Dharma-mahamatras are explained in these words by Asoka : "Among servants and masters Brahmans and the wealthy, among the helpless and the aged, they are employed in freeing from worldly cares their subordinates (in the department) of the Law of Piety. They are also employed on the revision (of sentences) of imprisonment or execution, in the reduction of penalties or (the grant of) release on the grounds of motive, having children, instigation or advanced years.....At Pataliputra and in all provincial towns, in the family establishments of the king's brothers and sisters, as well as all other relatives, they are everywhere employed."

Asoka issued the texts of the Buddhist scriptures in the Bhabru Edict for the guidance of the people. He also got his teachings engraved on rocks and pillars. Fourteen Rock Edicts are to be found at Shahbazgarhi, Mansera, Kalsi, Sopara, Girnar, Dhauli, Jaugada, Chitaldrug, Rupnath, Sahsram, Bairat, Maski and Bhabru. The pillar edicts or Silastambhas were ordered to be fixed up at Topara, Meerut, Kausambi, Lauriya-Araraj, Lauriya Nandangarh, Rampurva, Sanchi, Rummidei and Nigihva. The display of the principles of the Law of Piety at the above mentioned places must have helped the spread of Buddhism in the country.

Asoka tried to win over the goodwill of the people by the exhibition of the different orders of the gods with their resplendent complexions, their Vimanas (heavenly places) and Hastins or celestial elephants on the occasion of the Samjās. He ordered the planting of the Banyan trees and the establishment of mango groves. He ordered the digging of wells and the construction of the rest-houses. Watering places for men and beasts were also established. He made provision for the treatment of men and animals. Herbs were not only planted in the country but were also imported from outside. He ordered 25 jail deliveries. By placing all the resources of the state at the disposal of the Buddhist church, he made Buddhism a world religion.

*Change in Foreign Policy.* The Kalinga War not only changed the religion of Asoka, but also influenced his foreign policy. After Kalinga, he gave up the policy of conquest. He told the rulers of the neighbouring states that they should not be afraid of him, but trust him. He assured them that they would receive from him happiness and not sorrow. He even called upon his sons and grandsons to give up the policy of conquest. Asoka rightly boasted that

"The reverberation of the kettle-drums (Bherighoso) has become the reverberation of the law of piety (Dhammaghoso)". Asoka maintained friendly relations with the Cholas, Pandyas, Satiyaputra, Keralputra, Lambapanni or Ceylon and the realm of Amtiyako Yonaraja or Antiochos II. It has rightly been pointed out that as a result of this change in foreign policy, a period of stagnation set in the history of India. The Mauryan empire began to dwindle down in extent till it sank to the same position from which it had grown from the time of Bimbisara and Ajatasatru.

*Asoka's Ideal of Kingship.* Asoka had a very high ideal of kingship and an idea of the same can be had from the two Kalinga Edicts and Rock Edict VI. In the two Kalinga Edicts, Asoka started by affirming that all men were his children. "Just as for my children, I desire that they should enjoy all happiness and prosperity both in this world and the next, so for all men I desire the like happiness and prosperity." He also directed his officers to carry on administration on the principles of justice. To quote him, "There are, again, individuals who have been put in prison or to torture. You must be at hand to stop unwarranted imprisonment or torture. Again, many there are who suffer acts of violence. It should be your desire to set such people in the right way."

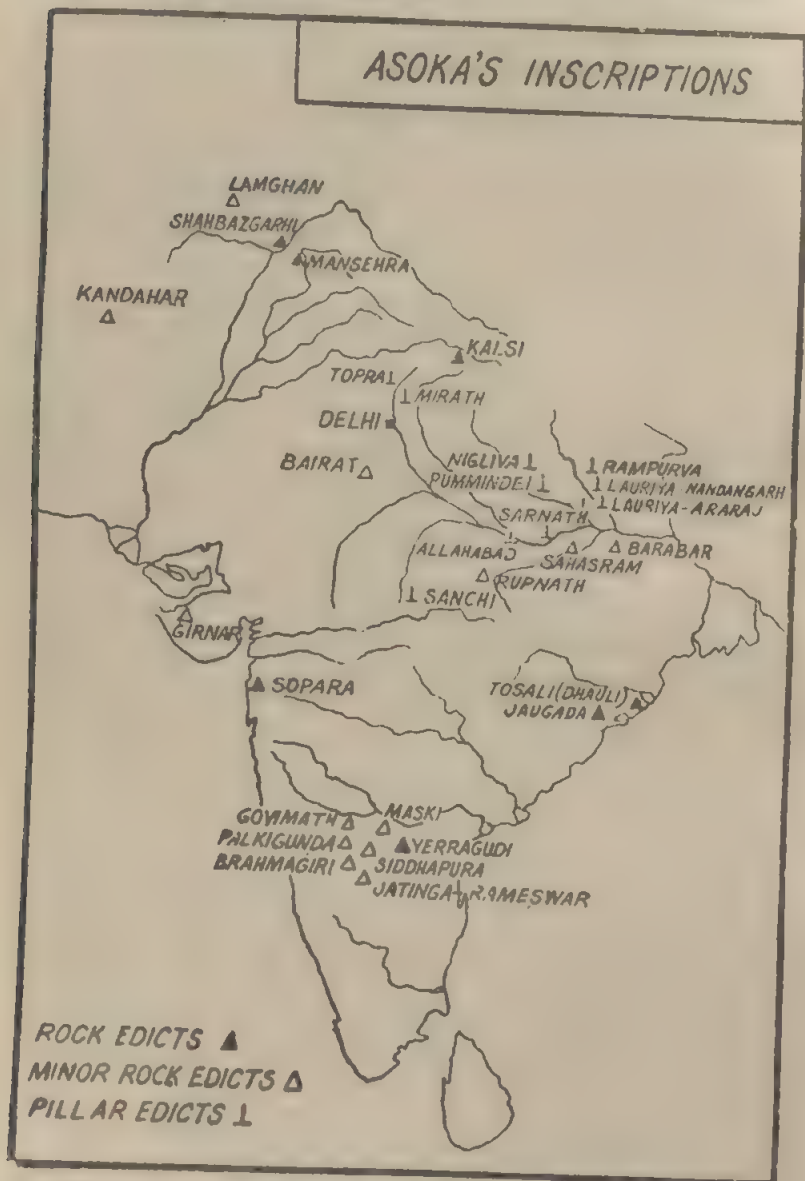
*Extent of Asoka's Empire.* The extent of Asoka's empire can be determined with precision from the distribution of his monuments, the contents of his inscriptions and the literary historical traditions of various kinds. Some of Asoka's inscriptions are to be found in various directions. Two of them are located at Shahbazgarhi and Mansera in the North-West, one at Kalsi in the North, another at Girnar, another at Sopara, another at Dhauli, another at Jaugada and still another at Yerragudi in Kurnool district. The inclusion of the far south is indicated by the Minor Rock Edicts in the Chitaldrug district of Mysore. According to Dr. R. K. Mookerji, the distribution of the inscriptions shows that Asoka's empire embraced the major part of India, excluding the Indian Peninsula to the south of approximately 14 degree latitude. There is a mention of the independent frontier kingdoms of Cholas, Pandyas, Keralputra, Satiyaputra and Tamraparni in the South and the Greek king Amtiyaka (Antiochos II) on the West. There is nothing to show that Amtiyaka ruled to the East of Herat and it can be presumed that the provinces ceded by Seleucus to Chandragupta Maurya were still under Asoka.

According to Dr. V.A. Smith, "The empire comprised the countries now known as Afghanistan, as far as the Hindu Kush; Baluchistan and Makran, Sind, Cutch (Kachchh), the Swat (Suwat) valley, with adjoining tribal territories, Kashmir, Nepal, and the whole of India proper, excepting Assam, as far south as the northern districts of Mysore and part of north-west Madras. The Tamil states of the extreme south were independent. It is possible, but not clearly proved, or perhaps probable, that the emperor also exercised jurisdiction in Khotan, now in Chinese Turkistan".



*Inscriptions of Asoka.* It has not been an easy task to recover the inscriptions of Asoka which were lying buried in wilderness and jungles. The work was done by the hunters, foresters and adventurous geographical explorers.

## ASOKA'S INSCRIPTIONS



The inscriptions of Asoka may be grouped as follows in accordance with their subject matter and the order of chronology which they seem to imply, viz., two Minor Rock Edicts, Bhambur Rock Edict, two Kalinga Rock Edicts, Fourteen Rock Edicts, Seven Pillar

Edicts, 4 Minor Pillar Edicts, two Commemorative Pillar Inscriptions and three Cave Inscriptions. The Fourteen Major Rock Edicts appear in a serial order except at Sopara where only a fragment of Rock Edict VI:1 has so far been found and at Dhauli and Jaugada where there are two special Edicts substituted in place of Rock Edicts XII and XIII. The last two lines of Rock Edicts IX are replaced by other words at Girnar, Dhauli and Jaugada. In rock Edict XIII, the later portion of line 6 is given in different words at Mansera, Kalsi and Girnar. The Girnar text has a new line at the end. At Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra, the script used is the Kharoshthi script but in all other inscriptions the Brahmi script has been used. As regards the Seven Pillar Edicts, six of them appear serially and the seventh is found only on the Pillar of Delhi-Topara.

*Minor Rock Edicts.* As regards the first Minor Rock Edict, its importance lies in personal history of Asoka. Edict II is a short summary of Dharama or Law of Piety. The various recensions of the first Minor Rock Edict are to be found at Siddapura, Jatinga-Ramesvara and Brahmagiri (in Mysore State), at Maski in former Nizam State, Sahasram in the Shahabad District of Bihar, Rupnath in the Jabalpur district and Bairat in Rajasthan. We have also come across Minor Rock Edicts at Govimath and Palkigunda. Minor Rock Edict II is added to the Mysore text only. These inscriptions date from about 258 or 257 B.C.

The Bhabru Edict is incised on a boulder, now in Calcutta, which was removed from the top of a hill at Bairat.

*Fourteen Rock Edicts.* The Fourteen Rock Edicts contain an exposition of Asoka's principles of Government and ethical system. All these Edicts are confined to the remote frontier provinces which were under the control of Viceroys. The inscriptions were probably issued between 257 and 256 B.C. In the North-West, those Edicts have been found at Mansehra near Abbotabad and Shahbazgarhi near Peshawar. The script of these two inscriptions is Kharoshthi which is written from right to left. The other inscriptions are in the Brahmi script. The Rock Edicts are found at Girnar and Kathiawar in the West, at Dhauli in the East and Maski in the South. These Edicts have also been found at Kalsi near Dehradun, Sopara in the Thana District of Bombay, Jaugada in the Ganjam District and at Yerragudi in the Kurnool District.

As regards the contents of the Fourteen Rock Edicts, animal sacrifices are condemned in Edict I. In Edict II Asoka described the medical arrangements made for men and animals. Edict III asked the officers to go on tours after every five years. The principles of the Law of Piety are also enunciated in this Edict. Some other principles of the Dharma are described in Edict IV. Edict V refers to the appointment of Dharma Mahamatras. Edict VI puts emphasis on self-restraint. Edicts VII and VIII refer to the pilgrimages of Asoka. Edict IX describes what is true gift and true ceremonial. In Edict X it is stated that king and high officers must exert themselves for the good of the people. Edict XI says that the highest gift is the gift of Dhamma. In Edict XII, emphasis is

put on religious toleration. Edict XIII gives details of the Kalinga War. Edict XIV refers to the repetition in the messages of the king and states that this had been done to create among the people a desire to lead a spiritual life.

*Kalinga Edicts.* The two Kalinga Edicts are special supplements to the series of Fourteen Rock Edicts. These were substituted for Edicts XII and XIII of the regular series. These two Kalinga Edicts laid down the principles on which the newly conquered province of Kalinga was to be governed. The two Edicts are to be found at Dhauli and Jaugada. They were most probably issued in 256 B.C.

The cave inscriptions were engraved between 257 and 250 B.C. These inscriptions are in the Barabar Hills near Gaya. These inscriptions tell us that these caves were dedicated by Asoka to the Ajivikas. These inscriptions show that Asoka followed a policy of religious toleration.

The two Tarai Pillar Inscriptions are found at Rummindei in Nepal and at Nigliva in the Nepalese Tarai. These inscriptions definitely prove that Asoka went on a pilgrimage of the holy places connected with the life of Buddha. From these inscriptions we can also find out the exact place where Buddha was born. These inscriptions also show that Asoka believed in "former Buddhas." These inscriptions were probably engraved about 249 B.C.

*Seven Pillar Edicts.* The Seven Pillar Edicts of Asoka were issued in their complete form about the year 242 B.C. Two of these pillars were originally at Topra in the Ambala District of the Punjab and at Meerut. However, both of these are at present in Delhi. There is one pillar at Allahabad which also has a record of the achievements of Samudragupta. We have also these Edicts on the pillars at Lauriya-Araraj, Lauriya-Nandangarh and Rampurva, all in the Champaran District of Tirhut.

The Minor Pillar Inscriptions are to be found at Sarnath, Sanchi and Kausambi. These inscriptions refer to penalties for schism in the Church.

The importance of the inscriptions of Asoka cannot be over-emphasized. As a matter of fact, they give us a complete picture of the life and achievements of Asoka. They give us a peep into the working of the inner mind of Asoka. They tell us how Asoka lived before the Kalinga War. They give us details about the horrors of the Kalinga War. They also tell us the effect of the Kalinga War on Asoka. They give us the details about the measures adopted by Asoka for the spread of Buddhism. They give us details about the various administrative reforms introduced by Asoka. They give us an idea of the relations of Asoka with the neighbouring countries, and also the foreign states. There is also a reference to the Greek king who was his contemporary. This fact has helped us to establish definitely the chronology of Asoka's reign. His inscriptions help us to give a picture of the social, religious and economic life of the people in his time. They help us to determine the extent of his empire

as explained above. They help us to locate the exact place of birth of Buddha. We also learn from them the names of the sacred places which were associated with the name of Buddha. We also have an idea of some of the doctrines of the Buddhist faith. We also have the details of the Law of Piety as expounded by Asoka. We have an idea of Asoka's conception of an ideal king. In short, we can judge the greatness of Asoka from his inscriptions.

*Estimate.* According to Dr. Raychaudhuri, "Asoka is one of the most remarkable personalities in the history of India. He was tireless in his exertions, and unflagging in his zeal all directed to the promotion of the spiritual and moral welfare of his people whom he called his children. Of his energy, ability and power of organisation, there is no doubt. He was the statesman who conducted successfully a great military campaign that led to the destruction of a powerful adversary whose sway extended over a vast and populous realm. He organised, a few years later, missions for the spiritual conquest of three continents, and turned a local sect in the Ganges valley into a world religion. He preached and practised the virtues of concord, toleration and non-violence. He eschewed military conquest, not after defeat but after victory, and pursued a policy of gentleness and clemency while still possessed of the vast resources of a mighty empire. The generosity and forbearance of this strong man were only matched by his sincerity and veracity, and he describes in words at once truthful and straightforward the terrible misery that he had inflicted on the people of a hapless kingdom. The example of the pious Maurya king exercised an ennobling influence on succeeding generations. But the ruler who turned officers of state into religious propagandists, abolished the royal hunt and jousts of arms, entrusted the fierce tribesmen of the north-western and southern provinces to the tender care of preachers of morality, and did not rest till the sound of war-drum was completely hushed and the only sound that was heard was that of religious discourses, certainly pursued a policy at which the great empire-builders who came before him would have looked askance. And it is not surprising that within a few years of his death the power that had hurled back the battalions of Seleucus proved unequal to the task of protecting the country from the princelings of Bactria."

According to H.G. Wells, "Amidst the tens and thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majestys, graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines and shines alone almost as a star. From the Volga to Japan, his name is still honoured. China, Tibet and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have heard the names of Constantine or Charlmagne."

According to Paul Masson-Oursol and others, "The third king of the Maurya line was not only the greatest native ruler of India, but one of great philosopher-kings of history. He had the nobility and gentleness of Marcus Aurelius, with no share of his weakness and disillusionment. He had that complete mastery of the spiritual



and the temporal which is in theory an attribute of the Chinese K'un Tseu, but without the hieratic inertia of non-action. No one has combined energy and benevolence, justice and charity, as he did. He was the living embodiment of his own time, and he comes before us as quite a modern figure. In the course of a long reign he achieved what seems to us to be a mere aspiration of the visionary; enjoying the greatest possible material power, he organized peace. For beyond his own vast dominions he realized what has been the dream of some religions—universal order, an order embracing Mankind."

*Successors of Asoka.* There are conflicting accounts with regard to the successors of Asoka, and it is practically impossible to give a definite chronology with regard to them. It is admitted that Asoka had many children, but it is difficult to state as to who actually succeeded him. It is practically certain that Tivara, his son from Queen Karuvaki, did not ascend the throne at all. Three other sons, *viz.*, Mahendra, Kunala and Jalauka are mentioned in literature. Sometimes, Mahendra is mentioned as the son of Asoka and sometimes his brother, and it is difficult to say which of the two he actually was.

As regards the various accounts regarding the successors of Asoka, the Vishnu Purana gives their names thus: Suyasa, Dasaratha, Sangata, Salisuka, Somasarman, Satadhanvan and Brihadratha. The list in the Matsya Purana is as under: Dasaratha, Samprati, Satadhanvan and Brihadratha. According to the Vayu Purana, Kunala ruled for 8 years after the death of Asoka. Kunala was succeeded by Bandhupalita and the latter by Indrapalita who was succeeded by Devavarman, Satadhanus and Brihadratha. According to Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangini*, Asoka was succeeded by Jalauka in Kashmir. Taranatha, the Tibetan historian, states that Virasena was the successor of Asoka in Gandhara. In the Divyavadana, we find the following list of the successors of Asoka: Sampadhi, Vrihaspati, Vrishasena, Pushyadharman and Pushyamitra.

Efforts have been made by many historians to present some plausible chronology of the successors of Asoka. There are many references in various works which establish the existence of Kunala. However, it is stated that he was blind, and consequently it is possible that the work of the administration was carried on by his son Samprati who is mentioned in some books as the immediate successor of Asoka.

Kunala's son has been variously named as Bandhupalita, Sampadi and Vigatasoka. Two explanations have been offered. Either the three names were that of one person or they were three brothers. If it is taken that they were brothers, Bandhupalita may have been identical with Dasaratha, who was a grandson of Asoka and the predecessor of Samprati. According to Dr. Raychaudhuri, Indrapalita must be identified with Samprati or Salisuka as Bandhupalita is identified with Dasaratha or Samprati. It is to be noted that the Jain books give as high a place to Samprati as the Buddhist books give to Asoka. It is stated in the Pataliputrakalpa that

"in Pataliputra flourished the great king Samprati, son of Kunala, Lord of Bharata, with its three continents, the great Arnata who established Viharas for Sramanas even in non-Aryan countries." According to Dr. V.A. Smith, the dominions of Samprati included Avanti and Western India. The Jain books prove that Samprati ruled not only over Pataliputra but also over Ujjain.

The Vishnu Purana, the Vayu Purana, and the Gargi Samhita prove the existence of *Sahisuka*. According to Raychaudhuri, *Sahisuka* may have been identical with *Vrihaspati*, son of Samprati, unless *Vrihaspati* represented a different branch of the imperial family.

According to Raychaudhuri, *Devavarman* and *Somasarman* are the different readings of the same name, and the same is the case with *Satadhanush* and *Satadhanvan*. The same writer says that it is not easy to identify *Vrishasena* and *Pushyadhanvan*. It is possible that those were merely secondary names of *Devavarman* and *Satadhanvan*. It is also possible that they might have represented a separate branch of the Mauryas.

Both the Puranas and *Harshacharit* of Bana mention *Brihadraha* as the last of the Maurya kings of Magadha. It is stated that he was killed by *Pushyamitra*, his Commander-in-Chief. There are references to petty Mauryan rulers even in later times, both in Magadha and in Western India. But they do not deserve any mention.

*Downfall of the Mauryas.* The mighty empire of the Mauryas began to decline after the death of Asoka and ultimately disappeared from the scene when *Brihadraha* was killed by his Commander-in-Chief in 187 B.C. The fall of the Mauryas has been attributed to many causes.

According to *Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri*, it was the revolt of the Brahmanas against the Mauryan Empire which not only sapped its foundations but also dismembered the same. The author gives the first place to the edicts of Asoka against animal sacrifices. His contention is that the edict was directed against the Brahmanas as a class and was particularly offensive as the same was issued by a Sudra ruler. According to the same writer, this edict "was followed by another edict in which Asoka boasted that those who were regarded as gods on earth have been reduced by him into false gods. If it means anything, it means that the Brahmanas who were regarded as *Bhudevas* or gods on earth had been shown up by him." It is also pointed out that the appointment of *Dharmamahamatras* or superintendents of morals was also a direct invasion of the rights and privileges of the Brahmanas. Another cause was the insistence of Asoka on the strict observance by his officers the principles of *Danda-Samata* and *Vyavahara Samata*. These terms are taken to imply "equality of punishment" and "equality in law suits" irrespective of caste, colour and creed. This was offensive to the Brahmanas as they claimed many privileges including immunity from capital punishment. The author also maintains that after the death of Asoka, the Brahmanas revolted

against his successors. He concludes by a reference to the assassination of Bahadratta by Pushyamitra. He points out that there was clearly the hand of the Brahmins in the great revolution.

However, scholars like Dr. Raychaudhuri point out that the thesis of M. M. Heuprasid Sastri does not bear scrutiny at all. It is pointed out that the prohibition of animal sacrifices should not be interpreted as an attack on the Brahmins. The ancient sages had themselves condemned the animal sacrifices and advocated the principle of Ahimsa or non-violence. This was particularly maintained in the Upanishadas. It is also pointed out that P. M. Sastri is wrong when he says that the Mauryas were Sudras. The evidence is not consistent on this point and the latest view is that the Mauryas were Kshatriyas. It is also contended that the Dharma-mahamatras did not encroach upon the rights and privileges of the Brahmins. Moreover, there is nothing to show that the Dharma-mahamatras were not recruited from the Brahmins or the entry of the Brahmins was banned.

There is also the evidence that Asoka did not show any enmity against the Brahmins. In one of his inscriptions, Asoka has inculcated liberality to Brahmins. In another inscription, Asoka disapproved of any disrespect shown to Brahmins. In one of the inscriptions it is stated that one of the duties of the Dharma-mahamatras was to look after the welfare and happiness of the Brahmins. Moreover, we have absolutely no evidence to show that there was any conflict between the Brahmins and the successors of Asoka. The relations between Jalauka, one of the successors of Asoka, and the Brahmins were very friendly. The Mauryan kings employed Brahmins as high officials. This is proved by the fact that Pushyamitra was the Commander-in-Chief of the last Maurya king. There is nothing to show that the Brahmins had a hand in the overthrow of the Mauryas. It is pointed out that the Mauryan Empire had already begun to decline soon after the death of Asoka and consequently its downfall could not be attributed to any revolt of the Brahmins.

According to Dr. Mookerjee, the reasons for the downfall of Mauryan Empire was neither military nor moral. It is to be found in the inherent and inner condition of the Mauryan Empire as a political organisation. The empire was a monarchy or despotism and no monarch can assure in his successors the continuance of the qualities on which alone a personal rule can rest. One cannot bequeath to his children his personal qualifications. The kingdom of Dharma which Asoka tried to set up could not survive him as it was not broad-based upon the will of the people.

The same author points out that Asoka himself left certain independent and disintegrated elements to operate within his empire. As a matter of principle, he stood for the equality of all states and people whether they were small or weak. Instead of subduing them, they were allowed to retain their freedom and sovereignty. Those peoples are mentioned in his inscriptions and their names were Gandharas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Nabhapantis, Rashtrikas, Bhojas,

Pandukas, Pulindas, Andhras, Cholas, Pandaras, Satavaputas and Keralaputras. It is these very people who became stronger after the death of Asoka and ultimately contributed to the fall of the Mauryan Empire.

Another cause of the downfall of the Mauryan Empire was the weak successors of Asoka. It is rightly pointed out that Asoka was succeeded by a progeny of pigmies whose "shoulders were not fit to bear the weight of his mighty monarchy". They could not stop the disintegrating forces which were working after the death of Asoka. The result of this was that the various parts of the Mauryan Empire became independent and ultimately the Mauryan Empire disappeared. Kalhana, the author of the *Rajatarangini*, tells us that after the death of Asoka, Jalauka, one of his own sons, made himself independent in Kashmir and conquered the plains including Kanauj. According to Taranath, the Tibetan historian, Virasena wrested Gandhara from the hands of one of the weak successors of Asoka at the Magadha throne. The *Malavikagnimitram* of Kalidasa shows that Vidarbha or Berar had become independent of Magadha. The loss of the northern provinces is proved by the following statement of Polybius, the Greek writer: "He (Antiochos, the Great) crossed the Caucasus (Hindukush) and descended into India; renewed his friendship with Sophagasenus, the king of the Indians; received more elephants, until he had 150 altogether, and having once more provisioned his troops, set out again personally with his army, leaving Androsthenes of Cyzicus, the duty of taking home the treasure which this king had agreed to hand over to him." This statement shows that Subhagsena ruled as an independent ruler about 206 B.C. over the northern provinces.

Another cause of the downfall of the Mauryan Empire was the Greek invasion of India. A reference to this invasion is made not only by Polybius but also by the *Gargi Samhita*. The failure of the Mauryan kings to check the Greek invasion must have ruined their prestige in the eyes of the people of India and when that was gone, the empire could not have survived long.

Another cause of the fall of the Mauryas is attributed to the oppressive rule of the Mauryan officials in the outlying provinces. It is pointed out that the people of Taxila revolted in the time of Bindusara against the oppressive rule of the officials who were called "wicked ministers". There was another revolt of the people of Taxila against the tyranny of the ministers during the reign of Asoka. Prince Kunala was sent to Taxila to suppress the revolt and the people declared that they were not opposed to the king but were opposed to the ministers who were tyrannising over them. According to Dr. Raychaudhuri, the reality of ministerial oppression is affirmed by Asoka himself in the Kalinga Edicts. However, this view is not accepted by Prof. Nilakanta Sastri. According to him, "The casual reference to wicked officials (*dushta amatyas*) in the legends of the Divyavadana can give no secure foundation for postulating the general prevalence of oppression throughout the empire; and there is nothing in the separate Kalinga edicts that goes to prove, as has been urged, that such oppression was a reality."



Regarding the causes of the downfall of the Mauryan Empire, Dr. R. Thapar says that the decline of the Mauryan Empire cannot be satisfactorily explained by quoting military inactivity, Brahman resentment, popular uprisings or economic pressure. The causes were far more fundamental and included a much wider perspective of Mauryan life. The organisation of administration and the conception of the state or the nation were of great significance in the causes of the decline of the Mauryas. Mauryan bureaucracy might have saved the situation and prevented the disintegration of the empire if it had been of a different nature. The administration was of an extremely centralised character, with the higher functions as far as possible under the direct control of the ruler. This necessitated a king of great personal ability. In such a situation, the weakening of the central control leads automatically to a weakening of the administration. With the death of Asoka and the uneven quality of his successors, there was a weakening at the centre, particularly after the division of the empire. The breaking away of the provinces was almost inevitable.

Regarding the downfall of the Mauryas, Dr. Mookerjee observes thus : "But even if Asoka's policy brought about the downfall of the Mauryan Empire, India has no cause to regret the fact. That empire would have fallen to pieces sooner or later, even if Asoka had followed the policy of blood and iron of his grandfather. But the moral ascendancy of Indian culture over a large part of the civilized world, which Asoka was mainly instrumental in bringing about, remained for centuries as a monument to her glory and has not altogether vanished even now after the lapse of more than two thousand years."

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Barua, B. M.          | : Asoka and His Inscriptions, Calcutta, 1946. |
| Bhandarkar, D. R.     | : Asoka.                                      |
| Gokhale, B. G.        | : Buddhism and Asoka.                         |
| Macphail, J. M.       | : Asoka.                                      |
| Majumdar, R. C. (Ed.) | : The Age of Imperial Unity.                  |
| Mookerjee, R. K.      | : Asoka.                                      |
| Smith, V. A.          | : Asoka, the Buddhist Emperor of India.       |

## CHAPTER XX

### MAURYAN ADMINISTRATION AND ART

*Mauryan Administration : Position of King.* The Raja was the head of the State. He had judicial, legislative and executive powers. He was the war-lord and as such considered plans of military operations with his Senapati. He was also the fountain of justice. It was his duty to see that justice was administered to the people. As regards the legislative functions of the king, the latter has been described by Kautilya as "Dharma Pravartak." The king issued what were known as *Sasanas* or Ordinances. The edicts of Asoka are examples of those *Sasanas*. It was also the duty of the king to appoint ministers, priests and superintendents, attend to receipts and expenditure of the state, carry on correspondence with the *Mantriparishad*, receive envoys, appoint spies to collect secret information, etc.

The Mauryan kings were not despots. There were certain limitations on their powers. They could not do whatever they pleased. They could not go against the laws of the country which was laid down by the law-givers. They had to govern according to the customs of the land. The *Mantriparishad* also must have put a check on the power of the king. The fear of the saints living in the jungles must have kept the king within the limits laid down by the law-givers.

*Mantrins.* According to Kautilya, sovereignty or *Rajatva* was possible only with assistance. A single wheel could never move. The king was to employ *Sachivas* and act according to their advice. The *Sachivas* or *Amatyas* of Kautilya corresponded to the seventh caste of Megasthenes. Although this class was small in number, yet it was ahead of all in the field of wisdom and justice. The important *Sachivas* or *Amatyas* were the *Mantrins* who probably corresponded to the *Mahamantras* of Asoka or the advisers of the king as described by Diodorus. The *Mantrins* were selected from those *Amatyas* who were found to be above temptations. Kautilya fixes their salary at 48,000 *panas* per annum. It was the duty of the *Mantrins* to advise the king on all matters of the state. At the time of emergency, the *Mantrins* were summoned along with the other members of the *Mantriparishad*. The *Mantrins* accompanied the king to the battlefield. They also exercised some control over the royal princes.

*Mantriparishad.* In addition to the *Mantrins*, there was also the *Mantriparishad*. Its existence is proved by the inscriptions of Asoka and Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. It is to be noted that while the salary of a *Mantrin* was 48,000 *panas*, that of a member of the *Mantriparishad* was 12,000 *panas*. It appears that the members of

the Mantriparishad were not consulted on all occasions, but they had to be summoned at the time of emergency. The king was bound to follow the majority of the Mantriparishad. The members of the Mantriparishad also attended the king at the time of the reception of envoys. Kautilya's view was that the size of the Mantriparishad was to depend upon the needs of the Empire and could not be fixed permanently at any particular number. The meetings of the Mantriparishad were secret. Its members were required to learn a lesson from tortoise which draws all its limbs within its shell.

*Amatyas.* In addition to the Mantrins and the members of the Mantriparishad, there were other Amatyas who performed judicial and administrative functions. They were employed in civil and criminal courts. They were employed as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Minister of the Interior, High Treasurer and Keeper of Stores, Superintendents of Pleasure Grounds, etc. Those Amatyas, who had not much experience, were to be employed in ordinary departments of the Government. It is suggested that the Amatyas of Kautilya may be the same as the seventh caste consisting of counselors and assessors of the king. They were in charge of the affairs of the State. According to Arrian, "From them are chosen their rulers, governors of provinces, deputies, treasurers, generals, admirals, controllers of expenditure and superintendents of agriculture."

*Adhyakshas.* Kautilya refers to a large number of Adhyakshas or Superintendents who were in-charge of various departments. It is suggested that the Superintendents of Kautilya may be the same as the magistrates of Strabo.

*Government of the Provinces.* The Mauryan Empire was divided into a number of provinces. It cannot be stated with certainty as to what was the number of provinces in the time of Chandragupta Maurya but in the time of Asoka, there were at least 4 provinces. The capitals of those provinces were at Taxila, Ujjain, Tosali and Suvarnagiri. The provincial Governors were of two kinds. The important provinces were put under the control of the princes of the royal blood known as Kumaras. Four Kumaras are mentioned in the Edicts of Asoka and they were posted at Taxila, Kalinga, Ujjain and Suvarnagiri. All Kumaras did not always enjoy full autonomy in their provinces. The Kumara of Tosali is mentioned not by himself but is associated with the Mahamatras. From this, it is inferred that Tosali was under the joint rule of the Kumara and the Mahamatras. On the other hand, the Kumaras of Ujjain and Taxila wielded practically independent authorities.

*Yuktas.* There is a reference to certain officers of the state in the inscriptions of Asoka and it is desirable to refer to their functions. As regards the Yuktas, there is a difference of opinion among scholars with regard to the exact position of this officer. According to Dr. F.W. Thomas, Yuktas were subordinate officers in-charge of the revenues of the king. They managed the property of the king for him. According to Dr. R.K. Mookerjee, Yuktas were the subordinates whose duty was to codify orders in the office of the Maha-

matras. They accompanied them on tours. According to Dr. D R Bhandarkar, Yuktas were officers of a high rank and their duty was to foster suffering.

*Rajukas.* As regards Rajukas, Buhler's view was that their duty was to measure land by means of a cord or Rajju and also fix their boundaries. According to Dr. Bhandarkar, Rajukas were Revenue Settlement Officers. They had under their control "hundreds of thousands of souls". According to Dr. Mookerjee, Rajukas were ordinary provincial Governors and their duty was to give happiness and favours to the people. The term 'Sukhiyan' is used with regard to Rajukas.

*Pradesikas.* As regards Pradesikas, Dr. Thomas's view was that their duty was to collect revenue and also perform police functions. According to Bhandarkar, a Pradesik was an officer in-charge of a division. According to Dr. Mookerjee, he was a provincial Governor who toured the province completely after every five years. A Pradesik was superior to a Rajuka.

*Purushas.* As regards Purushas, they knew the wishes of the kings and directed the Rajukas to act according to them.

*Vachabhumikas.* As regards Vachabhumikas, Dr. Bhandarkar points out to the difficulty of ascertaining its exact meaning. However, it appears, that his duties were to get taxes from the Vraja or certain classes of people who reared cattle of different kinds. According to Dr. Mookerjee, a Vachabhumika was in charge of rest-houses, groves, wells, parks, etc.

As regards the *Anta Mahamatras*, they seemed to mean high officers of the frontiers, or Wardens of the Marches. They have been referred to in the Edicts of Asoka. They were sent to the neighbouring states under the orders of Asoka. According to Dr. Bhandarkar, the Antamahamatras were not in-charge of frontier provinces of Asoka's empire. According to Dr. R.K. Mookerjee, the exact duties of Antamahamatras cannot be exactly mentioned. There may be some similarity between the Antapalas of Kautilya's Arthashastra and the Antamahamatras of Asoka's inscriptions.

*Dharma Mahamatras.* The institution of the Dharma Mahamatras was started by Asoka. Their duty was to bring about the material and spiritual good of the people. They had to perform many duties with regard to prisoners. Help was to be given to those who were needy. The Dharma Mahamatras did a lot of work in the neighbouring states. It was their duty to render assistance to the helpless and the aged. While distributing charity, they were not to be very discriminate against any person. According to Dr. Bhandarkar, the Dharma Mahamatras were in-charge of justice and they went on tours for that purpose.

*Overseers.* Reference may be made to overseers and spies. According to Greek writers, the overseers "overlook what is done throughout the country and in the cities and make report to the king where the Indians are ruled by a king or the magistrates where the people have a democratic Government." According to Strabo,



Inspectors or Overseers "are entrusted with the superintendence of all that is going on and it is their duty to report privately to the king. The best and the most faithful persons are appointed to the office of inspectors."

*Spies.* According to Strabo, the inspectors of the cities employed the courtesans who helped them in their work. There is also a reference to the employment of courtesans in Kautilya's Arthashastra. According to Kautilya, various kinds of spies were to be employed by the king, viz., fraudulent disciples, recluses, householders, merchants, ascetics, classmates, firebrands, poisoners and women of many kinds. Sometimes, serpent charmers were employed as spies.

*Village Administration.* Village was the unit of administration and Gramika was its head. He was helped by the Gram-Vridhdhas or the village elders. It is possible that the Gramik was not a paid servant of the State, but was elected by the people of the village. Above the Gramik were the *Gopa* who looked after 5 or 10 villages, and the *Sthanika*, who controlled one-quarter of a Janapada or District.

*Pataliputra.* Megasthenes has given us a description of the administration of Pataliputra. According to him, that city was controlled by a municipal commission of 30 members who were divided into 6 Boards of five members each. (1) The first Board was concerned with the industrial arts. Its duty was to check adulteration and fix the rates of fair wages. Capital punishment was inflicted on those persons who in any way impaired the efficiency of an artisan. (2) The second Board was concerned with foreigners. Foreigners were closely watched by officials who provided suitable lodgings, escorts and medical attendance. If any foreigner died, he was given a decent burial and his property was looked after by the officials of the State. (3) The third Board was concerned with the systematic registration of births and deaths. The object of registration was to collect information for the Government and also give facility in levying taxes. (4) The fourth Board was concerned with trade and commerce. This Board regulated sales and enforced the use of duly stamped weights and measures. Merchants had to pay a licence tax and the amount was to depend upon the number of commodities dealt with. (5) The fifth Board was responsible for the supervision of manufacturers. The law required the separation of the old goods from the new goods and the people who violated the law were punished. (6) The function of the sixth Board was the collection of tithes on the value of the goods sold. Capital punishment was the penalty fixed for those who violated this law. All the municipal commissioners in their collective capacity were required to control all the affairs of the city and keep in order the markets, temples, harbours and all public works. It is presumed that other cities of the Mauryan Empire must have been governed in the same way as Pataliputra was governed.

*Army.* Megasthenes also refers to the war office which consisted of 30 members. These 30 members were divided into 6 Boards

of 5 members each. The first Board was in-charge of the navy. The second Board was concerned with transport, Commissariat, and army service including the provision of drummers, groomers, mechanics and grass-cutters. A third Board dealt with the infantry. The fourth Board was concerned with cavalry. The fifth Board was in-charge of war chariots and the sixth Board was in-charge of elephants. All Indian armies had four arms (Chaturangi Sena). According to Dr. Smith, "The addition of co-ordinate supply and Admiralty departments appears to be an innovation due to the genius of Chandragupta. His organisation must have been as efficient in practice as it was systematic on paper, for it enabled him not only in the words of Plutarch, to 'overrun and subdue all India', but also to expel the Macedonian garrisons and to repel the invasion of Seleucus."

*Justice.* As regards the administration of justice, the king was the head. However, as he could not dispose of all the cases himself he appointed a large number of judicial officers to decide cases according to law. According to Megasthenes, the Mauryan Penal Code was very severe and crimes were extremely rare. In the time of Asoka, justice was tempered with kindness. Asoka ordered his Mahamatras to avoid causeless imprisonment and harassment of the people. A respite of three days was to be given to persons who were condemned to death. Asoka employed several officials to tour the provinces after three or five years. It was their duty to see that there was no injustice done to the people.

*Sources of Revenue.* As regards the revenues of the State, taxes were levied both in cash and in kind. Those were collected by the local officers. The land revenue was the chief source of the income of the state. It was levied at the rate of one-fourth of the produce of the land. Some income was got from taxes on sales. The taxes on sales were levied according to the prices of the goods. There was also the system of excise licences. The Government also made some money from water rates, royalties on mines and fisheries, revenues from crown-lands and forests, fines, taxes on professions, etc.

*Paternal Government.* It is to be noticed that the Mauryans had a paternal form of Government. Reference may be made in this connection to the views of Asoka on this point. According to him, "All men are my children and just as I desire for my children that they enjoy every kind of prosperity and happiness, so also do I desire the same for all men." Again, "As a man would make over his child to a skilful nurse, and feeling confident says to himself 'the skilful nurse is eager to care for the happiness of my child', even so my governors have been created for the welfare of the country." It is difficult to have a more lofty ideal for the administration of the country.

*Mauryan Art.* According to Dr. Bagchi and Prof. Sastri, the age of the Mauryas constituted a notable epoch in the field of art and architecture. The magnificent art which flourished for about 50 years in the time of Asoka had no precedent and left no long-stand-

ing tradition as it failed to strike root. It was a parenthesis in the development of the indigenous art of India.

The view of Havell was that there were two distinct phases in the sculptured art of the Mauryan period. The first phase was distinguished by great nobility of design, a cultured form of expression, and the finest technical accomplishment. To this class belonged the stone pillars of Asoka. Havell criticised the theory that the Mauryan emperors imported all their best craftsmen from Persia. His contention was that such a view showed a lack of insight into Indian thought. The truth was that the symbolism of the royal craftsmen was thoroughly characteristic of Indo-Aryan thought. The so-called 'Persian bell-shaped capital' of Asokan pillars was a symbolic motif which was universal in Indian art. The label was misleading. The capital represented a flower and not a bell. It was the blue lotus of the sky, the flower of Vishnu. The pillar had the same significance of world-dominion as the State umbrella which was a part of the paraphernalia of Indian royalty. The lotus symbolism was more characteristic of Indian art than the Persian art. The pink petals of the lotus flower were the robes of the Dawn Maiden (Ushas) and the pericarp was the rising sun. The lotus was associated with the earliest Vedic traditions of India.

According to the same writer (Havell), the second phase of the Mauryan art was shown in the profuse sculpture of the stupas of Bharhut and Sanchi which recorded current events and legends connected with the life of the Buddha as told in the Jatakas. This art could be called primitive. It often reached a very high standard of technique. However, it was generally less cultured and refined. It was the work of lower grades of craftsmen. It was less pure in style. It was expressive of the craftsmen's own racial character in combining many non-Aryan elements with the Aryan ideas which dominated it.

The view of Sir John Marshall was that two different classes of sculpture were to be found in the Mauryan period. The statue from Parkham in the Mathura Museum could be regarded as the "type specimen" of the first class. "The second class of Indian sculpture is represented by the Sarnath capital, which evinces a striking disparity in the style of sculptural ornamentation. This disparity is well exemplified by comparing the primitive treatment of the statue from Parkham in the Mathura Museum with the highly developed modelling of the Sarnath capital. The former represents a stage of art not yet emancipated from the binding law of frontality or from the trammels imposed by the pre-possessions of the artist. The head and torso are so posed that, were they bisected vertically, the two halves would be found to be almost symmetrical; while the flattened sides and back of the figure, connected only by a slight chamfering of the edges, are conclusive proof that the sculptor failed to grasp more than one aspect of his subject at a time, or to co-ordinate its parts harmoniously together as an organic whole. These features are not mere superficial details of technique, due to the caprice of the artist. They are the fundamental characteristics of the nascent sculpture of all countries, and the primitiveness of the art

which they signify is borne out in this particular statue by other traits, namely, by the subordination of the side and back to the front aspect, by the inorganic attachment of the ear, by the uncouth proportions of the neck, by the intentional rotundity of the abdomen, and the absence of modelling in the feet.

"The Sarnath capital, on the other hand, though by no means a masterpiece, is the product of the most developed art of which the world was cognizant in the third century B.C. — the handiwork of one who had generations of artistic effort and experience behind him. In the masterful strength of the crowning lions, with their swelling veins and tense muscular development, and in the spirited realism of the reliefs below, there is no trace whatever of the limitations of primitive art. So far as naturalism was his aim, the sculptor has modelled his figures from nature, and has delineated their forms with bold faithful touch; but he has done more than this; he has consciously and of set purpose infused a tectonic conventional spirit into the four lions, so as to bring them into harmony with the architectural character of the monument, and in the case of the horse on the abacus he has availed himself of a type well known and approved in Western art. Equally mature is the technique of his relief work."

The view of Sir John Marshall was that the difference between the artists of the two schools was due to the training of the craftsmen of Asoka under the artists from Persia. The Greek influence alone could have influenced the modelling of the Sarnath capital. The artists of Asoka learned to impart the polish from the artists of the Achaemenid Empire. They learnt modelling from the Greek artists of Bactria. To quote Sir John, "While the Sarnath capital is thus an exotic alien to Indian ideas in expression and in execution, the Statue of Parkham falls naturally into line with other products of indigenous art and affords a valuable starting point for the study of its evolution. These two works represent the alpha and omega of early Indian art, between which all the sculptures known to us take their place, approximating to the one or the other extreme according as the Indian or the Perso-Hellenic spirit prevailed in them."

Dr. Smith was not prepared to go to the extent of ascribing foreign origin to the art of Asoka's period. He considered the treatment of the bull and the elephant in the Sarnath abacus as being entirely Indian in both subject and inspiration, and not in any way the outcome of a half-caste art. According to Codrington, the Persian capital is not quite closely related to the early Indian bell-capitals and does not show itself to be a necessary part of the structure of the Asokan pillar. "The Persian bell is conceived as part of a compound capital, and is always crowned by a further member, the lines of which curve upwards and outwards, the whole suggesting the flourishing head of a palm tree with a ring of drooping half dead leaves clustering below round the stem. Above this comes a quadruple bracket-like member with upper and lower incurving volutes; between which and the final member is nothing but a head-and-reel fillet. Above this, the head and bent-back fore-legs of the surmounting beast jut out, without any sort of abacus or intermediary



platform. The typical Achaemenid pillar-shaft was also fluted, not smooth, whatever its rudimentary form may have been."

The pillars show a brilliant polish which has been the wonder of coming generations. According to Dr. V.A. Smith, "The skill of the stone-cutter may be said to have attained perfection and to have accomplished tasks which would, perhaps, be found beyond the powers of the twentieth century. Gigantic shafts of hard sandstone thirty or forty feet in length, were dressed and proportioned with the utmost nicety, receiving a polish which no modern mason knows how to impart to the material."

Mauryan art is not represented by the Pillars of Asoka alone. We have many more specimens of the same. Seven rock-cut

sanctuaries belong to the time of Asoka and his successors. Four of them are on the Barabar hill and three of them are on the Nagarjuni hill. These places are near Gaya. It is possible that another cave at Sitamarhi near Gaya is also of the Mauryan period. The Gopi cave excavated in the reign of Dasratha is a tunnel-like excavation. It is 44 feet long, 19 feet wide and 10 feet high to the apex of the vaulted roof. These caves are chaste and severe. Their interiors are polished in the Asokan fashion.

The Greek writers have paid glowing tributes to the Mauryan palace at Pataliputra which was considered by them to be better than the palaces at Susa and Ekbatana. The gilded pillars of the palace were adorned with golden vines and silver birds. The palace stood in an extensive park studded with fish-ponds. It was furnished with a great variety

of ornamental trees and shrubs. About this very palace, Fahien, the Chinese traveller, observed thus : "The royal palace and halls in the



midst of the city which exist now as of old, were all made by spirits which he (Asoka) employed and which piled up the stones, reared the walls and gates and executed the elegant carving and inlaid sculpture-work in a way which no human hands of this world could accomplish."

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|--------------------|--|
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## CHAPTER XXI

### THE SUNGAS AND KANVAS

*The Sungas (185—73 B.C.).* The Mauryas were succeeded by the Sungas and the latter ruled for 112 years from about 185 B.C. to 73 B.C. It is stated in the Puranas that the 10 Mauryas will enjoy the earth for full 137 years. After them, it will go to the Sungas. Pushyamitra, the commander-in-chief, will uproot Brihadratha and rule the kingdom for 36 years. It is pointed out that Pushyamitra was successful in usurping the throne on account of a general feeling of dissatisfaction against the weak Mauryan rulers who had failed to protect the people against the Greek invaders who had succeeded in penetrating even up to Pataliputra.

*Sources.* Our chief sources of information for the history of the Sungas are the Puranas, the Harshacharita of Bana and the Mahabhasya of Patanjali. We also get some information from the Theravali of Merutunga, a Jain writer who flourished during the 14th century A.D. The *Malavikagnimitram* of Kalidasa also gives us a lot of information about the horse sacrifice of Pushyamitra and the fight of Agnimitra with the ruler of Vidarbha. The Ayodhya inscription of Dhandeva makes a reference to two horse sacrifices performed by Pushyamitra. The Divyavadana refers to the policy of religious persecution followed by the Sunga rulers. Taranath, the Tibetan historian, also refers to the policy of religious persecution followed by the Sunga rulers.

*Origin of Sungas.* There are many theories with regard to the origin of the Sungas. Panini describes the Sungas as Brahmins of Bharadvaja Gotra and there seems to be nothing strange in this. We have many instances of Brahmins as Generals, e.g., Dronacharya, Kripacharya, Asvatthama, Parsurama, etc. This view is also accepted by K.P. Jayaswal. According to him, the Sungas were Brahmins and they occupied a high position in the theological world. Pushyamitra belonged to the family of the royal chaplain or Purohita of the Mauryas. The later Mauryas were degenerate and politically weak and Pushyamitra was forced to kill Brihadratha in the interests of the empire which was threatened by the foreign invaders.

*Pushyamitra (185—149 B.C.).* Pushyamitra is stated to have ruled for 36 years and he must have been an old man at the time of his death. There are references not only to his son but also to his grandson taking part in the administration of the country.

*Yavana Wars.* The throne which Pushyamitra ascended was not a bed of roses. He had to meet difficulties from various quarters. It is contended that there were two Yavana wars which Pushyamitra had to fight. One war he fought in the beginning of his reign and

the other at the close of his reign. The invasion of the Yavanas which is mentioned in the Gargi Samhita was a formidable one. It is stated that after reducing Saketa, Panchala and Mathura, the Yavanas reached Kusamadhvaja or Pataliputra. The Yavana leader was either defeated beyond the walls of Pataliputra or he retired without any fighting. There is nothing to show that Pushyamitra lost his capital to the foreign invaders. It is suggested that Demetrios was the leader of the foreign invaders who reached as far as Pataliputra and about whom there is a mention in the Gargi Samhita. It is pointed out that Demetrios had to retire from India on account of troubles at home. Eukratides had revolted in Bactria and Demetrios had to go back to fight against his enemy. There is a reference to the second conflict with the Yavanas in the *Malvikagnimitram* of Kalidasa. At this time, Pushyamitra must have been an old man. Vasumitra, the grandson of Pushyamitra, fought against the Yavana invaders. The battle was fought on the river Sindhu. Menander was the Yavana leader who was defeated by Vasumitra. It is pointed out that Menander is credited with having conquered more nations than Alexander. He was also the person who came after Demetrios. Coins also show that his territory extended up to Mathura. The Buddhist writers tell us that Menander became a convert to Buddhism and his court at Sakala or Sialkot became a refuge of Buddhist monks. Dr. V.A. Smith assigns the invasion of Menander to the years between 155 and 153 B.C. and this date coincides with the last few years of the reign of Pushyamitra.

*War with Vidarbha.* We have the details of the war between Agnimitra, son of Pushyamitra and Viceroy of Vidisa, against Vidarbha in the *Malavikagnimitram* of Kalidasa. It is stated that the kingdom of Vidarbha was a newly established one and like a newly planted tree had not taken firm roots. Yajnasena, king of Vidarbha, is represented as a relative of Brihadratha, the last Mauryan king whom Pushyamitra had ousted from the throne. It is possible that Yajnasena might have been a Governor of Vidarbha in the time of Brihadratha and declared himself independent after the usurpation of the Magadhan throne by Pushyamitra. Madhavasena, a cousin of Yajnasena, was secretly coming to see Agnimitra in Vidisa but he was captured near the frontiers and kept in prison. Agnimitra demanded the release of Madhavasena but the reply of Yajnasena was that Agnimitra should also release his brother-in-law, the Mauryan Minister, from prison. That led to war and Agnimitra deputed Virasena to march against Vidarbha. Yajnasena was defeated and Madhavasena was released. Vidarbha was divided between the two cousins with the river Varada forming the boundary line between the two kingdoms.

Dr. V.A. Smith was of the opinion that Kharvela, king of Kalinga, attacked Magadha twice in the time of Pushyamitra. According to Smith, in or about 165 B.C. Kharvela invaded Magadha and advanced to within a few miles of Pataliputra. Pushyamitra made a strategic withdrawal to Mathura and Kharvela considered it wise not to proceed further. The second invasion of Kharvela took place in about 161 B.C. and was more successful. Kharvela suddenly



appeared before the capital of Magadha on the north side of the Ganges which he crossed with the help of the famous elephants of the Kalinga. Pushyamitra was forced to submit and the treasures of his capital were seized by the victor.

However, this view is not accepted by many scholars. R.P. Chanda and Allan contend that the name of the king who is stated in the Hathigumpha inscription to have been defeated by Kharvela was Bahasatimita and not Pushyamitra and it is not possible to identify one with the other. It is maintained that such a suggestion is untenable on epigraphical and philological grounds.

Prof. Rapson was of the opinion that Pushyamitra lost Ujjain to the Andhra king, Satakarni I. For his conclusion, Prof. Rapson relied upon the Andhra coins bearing the name Sata. However, recent discoveries have shown that the view of Prof. Rapson was not correct.

**Horse sacrifices.** According to the Ayodhya Inscription, Pushyamitra performed two horse sacrifices. The horse sacrifice referred to in the *Malavikagnimitram* was performed towards the end of his reign and Patanjali, the author of *Mahabhashya*, officiated as a priest. The following passages occur in the *Mahabhashya*. "*Iha Pushyamitram Yajayamah*" (Here we perform the sacrifices for Pushyamitra). The question arises as to when the first horse sacrifice was performed. It is not possible to be very definite on this point. It is suggested that it will not be unreasonable to suppose that the first horse sacrifice was performed soon after the usurpation of the throne by Pushyamitra and probably also after the relief of Pataliputra from the first Yavana invasion. Pushyamitra was at the head of the Brahmans who were tired of the patronage of Buddhism by the Mauryan rulers and were aggressive for the revival of Brahmanism in the country. It is suggested that it was in the fitness of things that Pushyamitra should have celebrated his accession to the throne and relief from the Yavana invasion by the performance of a horse sacrifice.

**Pushyamitra and Buddhism.** Buddhist tradition as given in the Divyavadana and in the work of Taranath, the Tibetan historian, describes Pushyamitra as a great persecutor of Buddhism. It is stated in the Divyavadana that acting on the advice of his Brahman chaplain, Pushyamitra made up his mind to destroy the teachings of the Buddha. He went to destroy the monastery of Kukkutarama at Pataliputra. However, he came back as he was frightened by a roar. After that, he marched out with a four-fold army destroying stupas, burning monasteries and killing the monks, as far as Sakala. At Sakala, Pushyamitra issued a declaration that whoever would present him with the head of a Sramana would be rewarded with one hundred Dinaras (यो मे श्रमणशिरो दास्यति तस्याहं दोनारशतं दास्यामि), Sakala has been described in *Milindapanha* as a resort of the Buddhist monks.

The view of Dr. V.A. Smith was that it would be rash to reject the story of the persecution of Buddhism by Pushyamitra as wholly

baseless although it may be exaggerated. The view of Prof. N.N. Ghosh was that the Buddhist account regarding the persecution of Buddhism by Pushyamitra was a correct one.

However, many Indian writers have not accepted the view that Pushyamitra was responsible for the persecution of the Buddhists. To quote Dr. Raychaudhuri, "Late Buddhist writers are alleged to represent Pushyamitra as a cruel persecutor of the religion of Sakyamuni. But the Buddhist monuments at Bharhut erected during the sovereignty of the Sungas do not bear out the theory that the Sungas were leaders of a militant Brahmanism. Though staunch adherents of orthodox Hinduism, the Sungas do not appear to have been so intolerant as some writers represent them to be." A similar view is held by Dr. R.S. Tripathi.

Prof. Jagan Nath is of the opinion that while it may be conceded that the Buddhists, particularly the monks, may have suffered from certain disabilities, the story of a general persecution of all and sundry is the invention of frustrated minds which found that the state patronage was rapidly being shifted to the Brahmins and were against at the revival of the ancient Vedic ritual of the Asvamedha. It is not even unlikely that the hardships of Buddhists were in many cases due to political reasons and were of their own inviting. The Buddhist population may not have reconciled itself to the overthrow of the Mauryan dynasty which was looked upon by it as the bulwark of Buddhism. In the Punjab, Buddhism seems to have openly allied itself with the Greek invaders. This might have given Pushyamitra a cause for meeting out the treatment which all traitors deserve. The Buddhist religion as such appears to have escaped from the fury of Pushyamitra. Some of the noblest Buddhist monuments were not only spared but continued to receive both private and royal support.

*Successors of Pushyamitra.* When Pushyamitra died in about 149 B.C. after a reign of 36 years, he was succeeded by his son the Crown Prince, *Agnimitra* who had governed the southern provinces during the lifetime of his father. Agnimitra ruled for 8 years. No events of his reign are known. There are no inscriptions or coins of his reign.

Agnimitra was succeeded by *Sujyeshtha* who ruled for seven years. The numismatists are not inclined to assign to him the Kausambi coins bearing the legend *Jethamita*. No other information is available about him.

*Sujyeshtha* was succeeded in 133 B.C. by *Sumitra*. As a prince, he had won laurels in the battle against the Greeks while commanding the force escorting the sacrificial horse let loose by Pushyamitra. As a king, *Sumitra* took up the life of ease and pleasure. The result was that the Sunga empire began to disintegrate. Bana tells us that *Sumitra*, who was fond of music and dancing, was killed by *Muladeva* while enjoying a concert.

The Puranas mention the names of *Andhraka Pulindaka* and *Ghosha* as the successors of *Sumitra*. However, it is pointed out that these rulers did not belong to the Sunga dynasty and were

wrongly included in the Puranas. It is conceded that Sumitra was succeeded by *Vajramitra* in 123 B.C. and not by Andhraka. *Vajramitra* ruled for 9 years, and he was succeeded by *Bhagavata* in 114 B.C. *Bhagavata* ruled for 32 years and was succeeded by *Devabhuti* in 82 B.C.

Bana tells us that a Sunga king who was very much fond of the company of women lost his life at the hands of the daughter of his female attendant disguised as a queen. The murder was committed at the instance of Vasudeva, a minister of Devabhuti. After disposing of his master, Vasudeva ascended the throne and founded the Kanva dynasty in about 73 B.C. Thus ended the rule of the Sungas after a reign of 112 years.

*The Kanvas or Kanvayanas (73 B. C.—28 B. C.).* The Sungas were succeeded by the Kanvas. It is specifically stated in the Puranas that the Sungas "will enjoy this earth full 112 years. From them the earth will pass to the Kanvas".

The following is the account of the Kanvas as given in the Puranas: "He (Vasudeva), the Kanvayana, will be king for 9 years. His son Bhumimitra will reign 14 years. His son Narayana will reign 12 years. His son Susarman will reign 10 years. These are remembered as the Sungabhritya Kanvayana kings. These four Kanva Brahmans will enjoy the earth; for 45 years they will enjoy this earth. They will have the neighbouring kings in subjection and will be righteous. In succession to them the earth will pass to the Andhras." Thus, according to the Puranas, the Kanva Dynasty had four kings who ruled for 45 years. According to Dr. Smith, their rule lasted from about 73 B.C. to 28 B.C. According to Dr. Raychaudhuri, the Kanvas ruled from about 75 B.C. to 30 B.C.

We practically know nothing about any ruler of the Kanva dynasty. We come across certain coins bearing the legend Bhumimitra and it is suggested that they were issued by Bhumimitra, the Kanva king. However, the numismatists do not accept this suggestion and regard those coins as local issues. Some people have tried to identify the last king of the Kanva dynasty with Susarman, the founder of the Parivrajak dynasty. However, this view is not accepted.

It appears that the territory ruled by the Kanvas was very much less than that under the Sungas. The Punjab had already been occupied by the Greeks. The Mitra kings were ruling over the greater part of the Gangetic plains to the west of Magadha. The Sungas were still holding Vidisa. Although the Puranas tell us that the Kanvas enjoyed the allegiance of the feudatories, it seems that this was merely a conventional complement to a dynasty ruling over Magadha. Actually, their rule was probably confined to Magadha alone.

It is stated in the Puranas that the Kanvas were overthrown by the Andhras or Satavahanas. However, there is a lot of controversy with regard to the particular Andhra king who was responsible for the overthrow of the Kanva dynasty.

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## CHAPTER XXII

### THE SATAVAHANAS OR ANDHRAS

*Original Home of the Satavahanas.* There is a lot of controversy regarding the original home of the Satavahanas. Kings called Satavahanas and Satakarnis in inscriptions and coins are given the name of Andhras, Andhra-bhrityah and Andhrajatiyah in the Puranas. From this, scholars have come to the conclusion that the Satavahanas or the Satakarnis were identical with the Andhras. The view of Rapson, Smith and Bhandarkar was that the Satavahanas belonged to Andhradesa. Dr. Smith fixed the capital of the Andhras at Srikakulam but Bhandarkar preferred to fix the capital at Dhannakataka. According to Dr. Gopalchari, epigraphic, numismatic and literary evidence point to a Western origin, the region around Pratishthana which is modern Paithan in the Aurangabad district of former Hyderabad State. It is suggested that the original home of the Satavahanas was in Maharashtra. Probably Satakarni conquered Andhradesa and colonised the same after the subjugation of the natives. The Satavahanas later on lost their northern and western possessions and got so much mixed up with the people of Andhradesa whom they ruled that the Puranas called them not only the rulers of Andhradesa but also gave them the title of the Andhra kings.

The Satavahanas were Brahmans like the Sungas and Kanvas. This is confirmed by the Nasik cave inscription of Vasishtiputra Pulumayi where King Gautamiputra Satakarni is described as a unique Brahman, equal in prowess to Ram (Parsurama) and destroyer of the pride and prestige of the Kshatriyas.

*Chronology.* There is a lot of confusion regarding the chronology of the Satavahanas. According to Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar, the Andhras are mentioned in the Aitareya Brahman which was composed prior to 500 B.C. The Andhras were represented there as a Dasyu race, living on the fringes of the Aryan settlements and descended from Visvamitra. In the time of Chandragupta Maurya and Megasthenes, the Andhras occupied the deltas of the Godavari and Krishna rivers. They were famous for their military strength which was second only to that of Chandragupta Maurya. The Andhra territory included 30 walled towns and a large number of villages. The army had 1,00,000 foot soldiers, 2,000 horsemen and 1,000 elephants. Their capital was Sri-Kakulam on the lower course of the river Krishna.

In Rock Edict XII, Asoka makes a reference to the Andhras in these words : "And likewise here, in the king's dominions, among the Yonas and Kambojas, in Nabhaka of the Nabhitis, among the

Bhojas and Pitinkas, among the Andhras and Pulindas, everywhere men follow the Law of Piety as proclaimed by His Majesty." According to Dr. Smith, although the Andhras were a tributary of Asoka, they became independent after his death under the leadership of Simuka. This happened in the third century B.C. Smith accepts the statement in the Puranas that the Andhras ruled for about 460 years. The number of the kings also appears to be correctly stated as 30. This view is also accepted by Dr. Gopalchari. According to him, the Satavahanas ruled for 460 years. They started about 235 B.C. and ended about 225 A.D.

It has already been pointed out that all the Puranas do not agree regarding the exact period during which the Satavahanas ruled. The Matsya Purana gives the duration as 460 years, the Brahmanda gives 456 years, the Vayu gives 411 and the Vishnu gives only 300. The view of R.G. Bhandarkar was that the difference was due to the fact that some Puranas treated concurrent reigns from different capitals as successive. The view of Smith was that the discrepancy was due to the fact that some Puranas treated the duration of the Satavahana dynasty from its beginning, while others counted it from the end of the Kanva rule. According to Dr. Raychaudhuri, the inclusion of branch lines, the existence of which is attested by names like Kuntala Satakarni, is responsible for the difference.

In this book, we accept the view of Dr. Smith and Dr. Gopalchari that the Satavahana dynasty lasted for 460 years and its rule extended from about 235 B.C. to about 225 A.D.

*Simuka.* Simuka was the founder of the Satavahana dynasty and he ruled for 23 years from about 235 B.C. to 213 B.C. The Jain tradition is that Simuka built both Jain and Buddhist temples. However, he is stated to have become wicked towards the end of his reign. The result was that he was dethroned and killed.

*Kanha or Krishna.* Simuka was succeeded by his younger brother, Kanha or Krishna. He ruled from about 212 to 195 B.C. During the 18 years of his rule, Kanha continued the policy of conquest of his brother. No wonder, the Satavahana empire was extended to the west as far as Nasik.

*Satakarni I.* Kanha was succeeded by Satakarni I. According to the Puranas, he was the son of Kanha. However, Dr. Gopalchari suggests that the Simuka was the father of Satakarni I. Although he ruled for 9 years, he accomplished a lot. We have a lot of useful information from an inscription of his queen Nayanika. It is stated there that Satakarni I conquered Western Malwa and the territories known as Anupa (the Narmada Valley) and Vidharba (Berar). It is pointed out that the work of Satakarni I was made light by the confusion created in the country by the invasions of the Greeks. Satakarni I performed two Asvamedha sacrifices and one Rajasuya sacrifice. In this way, he became a Samrat. He took up the titles of *Dakshinapathapati* and *Apratihatachakra*. He performed a large number of other sacrifices also. On the occasion of the sacrifices, he gave a lot of things as *Dakshina*. It is stated that he gave, among other things, as *Dakshina* 42,700 cows, 10 elephants, 1,000 horses, 17

silver pots, one horse chariot and 68,000 Karshapanas. It appears that there must have been a lot of material prosperity in the country. It is possible that Satakarni was killed in the battle-field.

*Vedisiri and Satisiri.* Satakarni I was succeeded by his two minor sons, Vedisiri and Satisiri. However, the government was carried on by their mother, Nayanika, with the help of her father. It appears that Vedisiri died during his minority. Satisiri was probably his successor. However, the Puranas are unanimous on this point that Satakarni I was succeeded by *Purnotsanga*. Whatever may have been the name of the fourth king of the Satavahana dynasty, it was during his reign that Pushyamitra usurped the Maurya throne. The name of *Skandastambhi* is mentioned as the fifth king in the Matsya Purana, but it is suggested that the name is an imaginary one.

*Satakarni II.* Satakarni II ruled from about 166 B.C. to 111 B.C. He was probably the same person who is mentioned in the Hathigumpā and Bhilsa inscriptions. It appears that during his reign Eastern Malwa was conquered from a successor of Pushyamitra.

According to the Puranas, Satakarni II was succeeded by *Lambodara*. The latter was succeeded by his son and successor *Apilaka*. The next important king was *Kuntala Satakarni*. It is stated in the Kamasutra of Vatsyayana that Kuntala Satakarni struck Malayavati, his chief queen, with fingers held like a pair of scissors and as a result of that the queen died. It is stated in the Kavyamimamsa of Rajasekhara that Kuntala Satavahana ordered the use of Prakrit alone by the ladies of his inner apartments.

*Hala.* The next important name of the Satavahana dynasty was Hala. He was the 17th king of the line. He ruled from about 20 A.D. to 24 A.D. It is contended that King Hala was the greatest king in peace. He was a poet king. His name is mentioned in the Puranas, Lilavati, Saptasati, Abhidhana Chintamani and Desinamamala. It is pointed out that Saptastaka (Seven Centuries) is the composition of King Hala. The view of R.G. Bhandarkar was that either King Hala was the author of the work or the same was dedicated to him.

*Gautamiputra Sri Satakarni.* The next important king of Satavahana dynasty was Gautamiputra Sri Satakarni and he ruled from about 70 A.D. to 95 A.D. Gautamiputra Satakarni was the most outstanding monarch of the Satavahana dynasty. He not only restored the fallen fortunes of his dynasty but also brought under his rule vast territories.

Gautamiputra Satakarni has been described as the destroyer of the Sakas, Yavanas and Pahlavas. His great achievement was the extirpation of the Kshaharata dynasty to which Nahapana, the Saka chief, belonged. The overthrow of Nahapana must have taken place in the 18th year of his reign or shortly after. Aparanta, Anupa, Surashtra, Kukura, Akara and Avanti were conquered from Nahapana. In addition to these territories, Gautamiputra also held sway over Rishika, Asmaka, Mulaka and Vidarbha. Rishika has

been identified to be a district round Rishikanagar on the Krishna river. Asmaka has been identified to be the territory in the former Hyderabad state. Mulaka was on the Godavari river with its capital at Pratishthana. Vidarbha has been identified with Berar. The boundaries of the territory under his direct control extended from the Krishna in the South to Malwa and Kathiawar in the North and from Berar in the East to the Konkan in the West. He described himself as the lord of the Vindhya, Rikshavat, Pariyatra, Sahya, Mahendra and other mountain ranges encircling the peninsula of South India. He took up the title of *Tri-samudra-toya-pita-vahana* which means one whose charges drank the waters of the three seas in the East, West and South, viz., the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

It appears that before his death, Gautamiputra Satakarni lost most of the territories got by him from Nahapana. These territories seem to have been lost to the Kardamakas, another Scythian dynasty. Such a conclusion can be arrived at from a study of the geography of Ptolemy. A similar conclusion can be made from the Junagadh inscription of Rudradamana dated 150 A.D. This inscription shows that the whole of the territory conquered by Gautamiputra Satakarni from Nahapana was conquered by Rudradamana. It appears that Gautamiputra Satakarni tried to save some of his conquered territories by contracting a matrimonial alliance with the Kardamaka Sakas. A Kanheri inscription shows a certain Vasishthiputra Satkarni, probably a son of Gautamiputra Satkarni, as the husband of a daughter of a Mahakshatrapa who was probably Rudradamana.

Gautamiputra was not only a great warrior, he was also equal to the tasks of peace. He reformed the society of its abuses. He upheld the interests of all the four varnas or castes, whether they were Dvijas (twice-born) or Avaras (those belonging to the lower caste). He stopped the social evil called Varnasamkara, i.e., the intermingling of four social orders.

Gautamiputra has been described as a handsome person with a charming and radiant face. He had a beautiful gait. He had muscular and long arms. He was ready to impart fearlessness to all. He was an obedient son of his mother. He was reluctant to hurt even an offending enemy. He was the refuge of the virtuous. He was the fountain of good manners. He has been described as the asylum of fortune. He took great interest in the happiness of his subjects. He levied taxes according to what was considered to be just.

*Pulumayi II.* Gautamiputra Siri Satkarni was succeeded by Vasishthiputra Sami Siri Pulumayi. Pulumayi II ruled from about 96 A.D. to 119 A.D. His reign marked the zenith of the Satavahana dynasty. Pulumayi II not only maintained intact the empire of his father but also added to the same. His coins show that he extended his empire in the South. He also founded the town of Navanagara. He also took up the title of Navanagarsvami. He also took up the titles of Maharaja and Dakshinapathesvara. We



have a large number of coins of various varieties from different places. It is maintained that there was great economic prosperity in the country. The Stupa at Amaravati was enlarged and encased in richly sculptured marble slabs and surrounded by a railing. The fame of Pulumayi II seems to have been so great that he is referred to by Ptolemy, the famous geographer. Pulumayi II was also a contemporary of Chastana.

*Siri Satakani.* Pulumayi II was succeeded by Vasishthiputra Siri Satakani. His name is mentioned in the Vayu Purana which gives him a long reign of 29 years. He must have ruled from about 120 A.D. to 149 A.D. He was the son-in-law of Rudradamana. We have a large number of coins of this king.

*Siva-Siri Pulumayi.* The next king was Siva-Siri-Pulumayi who ruled from about 150 A.D. to 156 A.D. Dr. Gopalachari suggests that he was most probably the grandson of Pulumayi II and it was he who was probably the Satakarni who was defeated by Rudradamana. It is stated in the Rudradamana inscription from Girnar that Rudradamana "obtained good report because he in spite of having twice in fair fight completely defeated Satakarni, Lord of the Deccan, on account of their not distant connection, did not destroy him." It appears that the cause of the renewal of the conflict was the determination of Rudradamana to have revenge for the defeat of Nahapana by the Satavahanas and also to recover the provinces lost to the Satavahanas. Rudradamana was able to recover only Anupa and Aparanta but he failed to recover Asika, Asaka, Mulaka and Kuntala.

*Siri-Sivakhada Satakarni.* Siva-Siri-Pulumayi III was succeeded by his son Siri Sivakhada Satakarni. He ruled from about 157 A.D. to 159 A.D.

*Siri-Yana.* Siri-Yana came to the throne about 160 A.D. and continued to rule up to 189 A.D. His two Kanheri inscriptions, the Nasik inscription and the two Guntur inscriptions show that Siri-Yana ruled over both Eastern and Western Deccan. It is possible that he was able to recover Aparanta. According to Pargiter, some of the Puranas were given new touches during the reign of Siri-Yana. He was probably the king who is referred to by Bana as *Trisamudradhipati* and a friend of a mendicant named Nagarjuna. We have a large number of coins of Siri-Yana. Those coins are from Gujarat, Kathiawar, Sopara and the districts of Chanda, Akola, Godavari and Krishna. It appears that the closing years of his reign were disastrous for the Satavahana empire. The Abhiras broke the unity of the Deccan by taking away the territory around Nasik.

*Svami Sakesana.* Siri-Yana was succeeded by Madhariputa Svami Sakesana. We have some lion coins and elephant coins of this king. Another Satavahana king was *Vijaya* who ruled for 6 years. Vijaya was succeeded by *Vasithiputa Siri Chada Satakarni* and the latter ruled for 10 years.

*Pulumayi IV* was the last ruler of the Satavahana dynasty belonging to the main line. However, we have no trace of Pulumayi

IV's rule in Andhradesa. At this time, the Satavahana empire was disrupted. It was divided into 5 minor dynasties, e.g., the Chutus, the Pallavas, the Ikshvakus, the Abhiras, etc. Thus, the great Satavahana dynasty came to an end.

*The Deccan during the Satavahana period : Political.* On the basis of the information as derived from inscriptions, coins and literature of the Satavahana period, we can have an idea of the political, religious, social and economic life of the people. As regards the *political condition*, the Satavahana administration was very simple. The law as laid down in the Dharamsastras was enforced by the kings. Monarchy was hereditary in the male line. Although polygamy was practised, there is no evidence of any disputed succession, partition of the empire or fratricidal wars. The Satavahana kings merely took up the title of Raja. They did not believe in the divine right of kings. They did not claim to exercise any absolute power. They were controlled by the law as laid down in the Dharamsastras and the custom of the country. The king was the Commander-in Chief in war. He himself led the armies in the battlefield. He himself was the head of everybody. The princes were called Kumaras. The eldest son was not made the Yuvraja and he was not associated with the administration of the country. However, princes were appointed as viceroys. If the ruler was a minor, the administration of the country was carried on either by the brother of the deceased king or by the queen mother. This was actually done by Nayanika.

Excepting the areas under the control of the feudatories, the Satavahana empire was divided into *Janapadas* and *Aharas*. A Janapada consisted of a number of Aharas. An Ahara corresponded to a Pallava Rashtra and the modern district. Each Ahara derived its name from its headquarters. Each Ahara was divided into many Gamas. Amachas were in charge of Aharas. They were non-hereditary governors and were transferred from time to time. Gamika was in charge of a Gama. The names of other functionaries known to us are the Mahatarkas (Great Chamberlains), Maha Aryakas, Bhandargarikas (store-keepers), Heranikas (Treasurers), Mahamatras, Nibandhakars (officers in charge of registration of documents), Pratihars and Dutakas.

The king lived from hand to mouth. The taxes were not heavy. Their number was also small. The government got its income from the royal domain, taxes on land, income from monopoly of salt, and income from court fees. Many taxes were paid in kind.

*Social.* Society was divided into four classes. The first class consisted of Maharathis, Mahabhojas and Mahasenapatis. They formed the highest class in the society. There were feudatory chieftains in charge of Rashtras or districts. The Mahabhojas were located in North Konkan and the Maharathis were located in the country above the Western Ghats.

The second class consisted of both officials and non-officials. Among the officials were Amatyas, Mahamatras and Bhandargarikas. To the non-official class belonged the Naigama (merchant),

the Sarthvaha (head of a caravan of traders) and the Sresthin (head of a trade guild). To the third class belonged the Lekhaka (scribe), Vaidya (physician), Halakiya (cultivator), Suvarnakara (goldsmith) and Gandhika (druggist). To the fourth class belonged the Vardhaki (carpenter), Malakara (gardener), Lohavanija (blacksmith) and Dasaka (fisherman).

*Srenis.* The cultivators and mercantile people were divided into a number of Grihas (homesteads) or Kutumbas or Kulas (families). The head of each of them was called a Grihapati or Kutumbin. He occupied a position of authority. Srenis or craft-guilds were a normal feature of the Satavahana period. We have references to guilds of oil pressures, hydraulic machine artisans, potters, weavers, corn dealers, bamboo-workers and braziers. There must have been many more guilds of which we do not have any information. The prevalence of these guilds shows that the institutions of self-government were common in the country. The Srenis were not only craft or trade guilds, they acted also as banks. Money could be deposited in those guilds and that money carried interest. Very often perpetual endowments were made to the Srenis. We are told that Ushavadata made two permanent endowments to Kulika Nigamas or Srenis. The one endowment made provision for new robes and the other for minor food necessities. It must not be forgotten that Usavadata was a high personage and he could have made provision for feeding and robing from the local treasury but he preferred to deposit the money in guilds. That was due to the fact that guilds were considered to be more permanent than an empire which could be destroyed at any time.

We learn from inscriptions that whenever investments were made, interest was paid on them. The rate of interest varied. Sometimes, it was 9% and sometimes 12% per annum.

*Foreign Trade.* During the Satavahana period, foreign trade and commerce flourished. The Deccan played an important part in the commercial relations of India with the West. We can have an idea of the trade between India and the West from a study of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*. We are told that ships from Western countries sailed down the Red Sea and followed the Arabian coast up to Kane. From there some ships went to the Indus, some to Barygaza (Broach) and some to ports of Lymrika (Malabar). Paithan and Tagara were important marts of those days. The most important harbours were Suppara or Sopara and Keliena or Kalyana.

*Currency.* The currency of the country consisted of Karshapanas which were both silver and copper. Suvarna, a gold coin, was equal to 35 silver Karshapanas. One Karshapana weighed 146.4 grain and one Rati was equal to 1.83 grains.

*Religion.* As regards the religious condition of the people, both Hinduism and Buddhism flourished side by side. The Satavahana kings were Brahmanas and they performed many sacrifices. A reference to the Nanaghat inscription of Nayanika gives us an idea of the various kinds of sacrifices which were performed at that time. We are told that Satakarni I performed two Asvamedha sacrifices and



one Rajasuiya sacrifice. The same king is said to have performed sacrifices like Agnyadheya, Anvarambhaniya, Gavamayana, Angirasatiratra, Aptoryama, Angirasamayana, Gargatiratra, Chhandogapavaman-atiratra, Trayodasaratra, Dasaratra, etc. Not only sacrifices were performed, a lot of money was given to the Brahmans as *Dakshina*. In one case, 42,700 cows, ten elephants, 1,000 horses, 17 silver pots, one horse chariot and 68,000 Karshapanas were given as *Dakshina*. Sometimes *Dakshina* was given in the form of villages.

The Satavahana kings worshipped Samkarshana, Vasudeva, Indra, the Sun and the Moon. The Saptasati of King Hala refers to the worship of Indra, Krishna, Pasupati and Gauri. The mention of such names as Sivapalita, Sivakhadita, Sivadatta, Kumara, etc., points to the worship of Siva and Skanda. Likewise, the worship of Vishnu can be established from the mention of such names as Vishnu-palit, Venhu and Lachinika. In the Saptasati, Hari or Trivikrama is said to be superior to other gods.

Buddhism made a lot of progress during the Satavahana period of Indian history on account of the policy of religious toleration followed by the Satavahana kings. Satavahana kings gave as much help to Buddhism as they did to Hinduism. No wonder, Buddhism flourished throughout the Satavahana period. The progress of Buddhism is shown by the presence of the Buddhist caves and epigraphs at Pitalkhora, Nasik, Bhaja, Bedsa, Kondane and Kuda and the Buddhist Stupas at Bhattiprolu, Amaravati, Goli, Ghantasala and Gummadiidurru. Not only did the Satavahana kings encourage Buddhism, the royal example was followed by feudatories, officials, merchants, craftsmen and women. It appeared that there was some sort of a competition among them all to establish more and more caves and Viharas for the Buddhists.

It is to be noted that almost all the caves so far found in the Deccan are dedicated to Buddhism and they were all excavated during the Satavahana period. These Buddhist caves were of two kinds : *Chaityagrihas* or temples and *Layanas* or residential quarters for Bhikshus. The Chaityagrihas had vaulted roofs and horse-shoe shaped windows over the entrance.

It is to be noted that these caves were built by all and sundry for the Buddhists. Ample provision was made not only for the repair of those caves but also for the maintenance of Bhikshus who had to live there. For the repair of caves, villages were generally donated. For the feeding of Bhikshus, sometimes pieces of land were given and sometimes cash endowments were made. Very often, this money was deposited in the guilds. The Bhikshus occupied the caves only during the rainy season and during the rest of the year they were on their tours. It appears that certain caves were reserved for certain sects of the Buddhist monks.

It is interesting to find that during the Satavahana period a large number of foreigners embraced either Buddhism or Brahmanism. This was particularly so of the Yavanas, Sakas, Pahlavas and Abhiras who had settled in India.



*Suggested Readings*

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE BACTRIAN GREEKS, SAKAS AND PAHLAVAS

Bactria and Parthia were the two districts of the Empire of Seleucus. Sometimes about 250 B.C., both Bactria and Parthia revolted against Antiochus II, the grandson of Seleucus. Neither Antiochus II nor any of his immediate successors was strong enough to put down the revolts and consequently both Bactria and Parthia became independent. The leader of the revolt of the Bactrians was Diodotos I and that of the Parthians was Arsakes.

*The Bactrian Greek.* Before his revolt, Diodotos I had ruled over Bactria and Sogdiana for a long time as a Governor of the Seleucid emperors. As a Satrap, he had helped Antiochus I against Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt. Diodotos I was so powerful that he was feared by his neighbours and Arsakes had to keep a large army on a war-footing on account of fear from him.

Diodotos I was succeeded by his son Diodotos II. The latter made an alliance with the king of Parthia. The result was that both Bactria and Parthia were saved from Seleucus II. The rule of Diodotos II seems to have ended some time before 212 B.C. He was not only removed from the throne by Euthydemus but also killed after his dethronement.

*Euthydemus.* Euthydemus I himself had no peace. He himself was involved in a long war with Antiochus, the Great, of Syria. Finding his very existence at stake, Euthydemus I approached Antiochus for an honourable settlement. It was contended that he himself was not a rebel but had put the children to the rebels to death. If peace was not made between Bactria and Syria, there was every likelihood of both of them being destroyed by the Scythian barbarians who were always on the look out to fish in troubled waters. The importance of a strong and independent Bactria as a buffer state was emphasized. Antiochus was very much impressed and he not only recognised the independence of Bactria but also married one of his daughters to Demetrius, the son of Euthydemus. We do not know whether Bactria under Euthydemus carried her arms towards the South beyond the Hindu-Kush or not. However, it appears that parts of Arachosia and the provinces of Paropamisus and Aria were conquered during his reign. It is not possible to say as to when exactly Euthydemus died but probably that happened in about 190 B.C. It was under the able guidance of this energetic and powerful ruler that Bactria rose to the height of her glory. She was feared and respected by her neighbours, including Parthia.

*Demetrius.* Euthydemus was succeeded by his son, Demetrius. The latter was destined to play a prominent part in the history of

Bactria and India. Demetrius was the person who was responsible after Alexander for carrying Greek arms into the interior of India. His Indian expedition became the first of a series of subsequent Bactrian invasions of India. India's intimate contact with the Greeks began with the career of Demetrius.

Demetrius crossed the Hindu-Kush mountains with a large army some time in the early part of his reign. He conquered portions of the Punjab and Sindh. He probably founded cities for the purpose of effective administration of the newly acquired territories. Demetrius settled Greek garrisons in particular localities to protect his flank and rear during his Indian advance, and those must have helped the establishment of the settlements of the Bactrian Greeks later on. It is not possible to fix the exact limits of the advance of Demetrius into the interior of India but on account of his absence from Bactria for a long time, his position became weak and Eucratides was able to capture the throne of Bactria.

*Eucratides.* Not much is known about Eucratides who made himself the master of Bactria after the overthrow of Demetrius. However, he carried on the struggle with the successors of Demetrius in Bactria and India. While Eucratides was returning home after one of his conquering expeditions in India, he was attacked and murdered by his son. The latter drove his chariot over the body of his father and ordered the dead body to be thrown away. This happened in about 155 B.C.

*Heliocles.* Heliocles has been almost unanimously regarded as the immediate successor of Eucratides. It is generally believed that the Scythians or Sakas were responsible for driving Heliocles out of Bactria. The rule of Heliocles ended some time after 135 B.C.

After the loss of Bactria, the Yavanas continued to rule in Central and Southern Afghanistan and North-Western India. Their rule in those regions was characterised by internecine fighting amongst the various princes belonging to the houses of Demetrius and Eucratides. We can gather from the coins the names of more than thirty Indo-Bactrian Greek rulers, including Menander.

*Appollodotus.* The classical writers mention Appollodotus twice in association with Menander. It appears that he was an elder contemporary of Menander. He was probably his younger brother. We are not certain about the extent of his empire.

*Menander.* Menander was the greatest of the Indo-Greek rulers. He was born in a village 200 Yojanas from Sakala which was his capital. Sakala is modern Sialkot in Pakistan. We are not in a position to state the exact nature of the connection of Menander with the house of Euthydemus. In the Milindapanha, he is described as belonging to a royal family. However, it appears that he was a commoner. It is possible that he was connected by marriage with the house of Euthydemus. The view of Prof. Rapson is that Menander married Agathocleia, the daughter of Demetrius.

The Greek writers tell us that Menander was a great conqueror. He is stated to have conquered more nations than Alexander him-

self. From the great variety of the coins of Menander and the wide area of their distribution, it is concluded that he was the ruler of many kingdoms and was also a great conqueror. It is possible that the Yavanas, under his leadership, penetrated as far as Central India where he was defeated by Prince Vasumitra on the river Sindhu as stated in the *Maavaggaṃitram*. It is contended that Menander must have recovered from the house of Eucratides some of the lost possessions of the house of Euthydemus in the Kabul Valley where his coins have been found. He must have followed the expansionist policy of his house towards the south-east. We have come across a large number of his coins from the western districts of Uttar Pradesh. His coins are also known to have been current in Kathiawar. We are told by a high authority that Menander "crossed the Hyphatis to the east and reached the Isamus".

A casket containing two groups of Kharoshthi inscriptions has been discovered in the Bajaur tribal territory about 20 miles to the West of the confluence of the Panjkora and the Swat. One of these inscriptions refers to the reign of Menander. Some relics of Sakya-muni Buddha are said to have been installed in the casket for worship first by a prince named Viyakamitra, apparently a feudatory of Menander and afterwards by his son or grandson. All this points out to the hold of Menander over the Peshawar region and possibly also over the upper Kabul Valley. There was no independent Yavana ruler at Taxila or at Pushkalavati during this period. According to Dr. D.C. Sircar, the dominions of Menander appear to have comprised the Central parts of Afghanistan, North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab, Sindh, Rajputana and Kathiawar and probably also a portion of Western Uttar Pradesh.

The Milindapanha tells us that Menander became a convert to Buddhism. It is contended that his court at Sakala became a centre of refuge for the Buddhist monks who were persecuted by Pushyamitra the Sunga king. It is stated in the Divyavadana that Pushyamitra declared that whoever brought the head of a Buddhist monk at Sakala would be paid 100 Dinaras. As Menander was a zealous Buddhist, there is nothing strange in his giving protection to the Buddhists, who might have been persecuted by the Sungas.

The Milindapanha gives us a dialogue between Milinda or Menander and Nagasena, the learned Buddhist monk. Very searching questions concerned with Buddhist metaphysics and philosophy were put by Menander to Nagasena and all of them were answered to his satisfaction. The result was that Menander was converted to Buddhism.

According to Dr. D.C. Sircar, Menander is usually assigned to the middle of the 2nd century B.C., but he actually seems to have ruled at a later date, probably about 115—90 B.C.

It has been rightly pointed out by Prof. Rapson that the fame of Menander as a great and just ruler was not confined to India alone. Some two centuries after his time, Plutarch recounted to the Greek world the story how, after his death in camp, the cities of his realm contended for the honour of preserving his ashes. To quote Rapson,



"It is thus as a philosopher and not as a mighty conquerer, that Menander, like Janamejaya, king of the Kurus and Janaka, king of Videha, in the Upanishads, has won for himself an abiding fame." The Milindapanha pays the following tribute to Menander: "As a disputant he was hard to equal, harder still to overcome; the acknowledged superior of all the founders of the various schools of thought. As in wisdom so in strength of body, swiftness and valour there was found none equal to Milinda in India. He was rich, too mighty in wealth and prosperity, and the number of his armed hosts knew no end."

Menander was succeeded by his son, Strato I. He was a minor at the time of his accession to the throne. He ruled for a long time. He was succeeded by his grandson, Strato II.

*Antialcidas.* The name of Antialcidas has been found on an Indian monument. The inscription is on the Garuda Pillar at Besnagar, near Bhilsa in the former Gwalior State. It is stated there that the column was erected in honour of Vasudeva by the Yavana ambassador Heliodorus, son of Dion, an inhabitant of Takshshila who had come from the Greek king Antialcidas to king Kasiputra Bhagabhadra. The relation of Antialcidas with Heliocles is indicated by the common coin-type with which Heliocles restruck the coins of Agathocleia and Strato I. Sometimes it is conjectured that Antialcidas was the son of Heliocles and grandson of Eucratides. According to Dr. Sircar, it is not improbable that Antialcidas sought the friendship of the Indian king in his struggle against Menander.

*Hermæus.* Hermæus was the last representative of the Yavana house of Eucratides. His kingdom was confined to the upper Kabul Valley. His territory was hemmed in on every side by actual or possible foes. The Sakas were on the east, the Pahlavas were on the west and the Yueh-chi were on the north. The task which Hermæus had to face in maintaining the integrity of his small kingdom was a formidable one. In spite of all his efforts, he succumbed to the Parthians or Pahlavas some time in the beginning of the second-half of the first century B.C.

According to Dr. J. N. Banerjea, the conquest of India by the Indo-Bactrians was more important for India than that of Alexander. The cultural contact between the Greeks and the Indians for nearly two centuries was considerable and both parties reacted upon each other. It was not merely a case of the Greeks influencing the civilisation of India or *vice versa*. The religious ideals and ideologies of Indians were adopted by some of the great men of the ruling race. A large number of Greeks were converted to different Indian religions. The Greeks adopted gradually the Indian way of life. In due course of time, they became the children of the soil. They made a noble contribution towards the art of India. As the Greeks had receptive minds, they did not hesitate to experiment sometimes on the lines of Indian monetary technique. Numerous Kharoshthi letters and monographs may be containing the names of Indian die-

cutters. It was during this period that the foundations of the Gandhara art were laid.

**The Sakas.** The Sakas or Scythians were nomadic tribes who originally belonged to Central Asia. In about 165 B.C., they were turned out of their original home by the Yueh-chi. The Sakas migrated to the South-West and fought against the Greek kingdom of Bactria. Most of the Sakas settled down in the valley of the river Hilmand and established small states there. One of those settlements is still known as Sakistan or Seistan. With the passage of time, more Sakas came from Central Asia and consequently those who had settled in the North-West crossed the Hindu-Kush and Sulaiman ranges to settle in Northern India. They came into conflict with the Parthians. Some of the Saka chiefs joined service under the Parthians and were even appointed Governors or Satraps of the various provinces of the Parthian kingdom.

According to Dr. J. N. Banerjea, most of the Saka invaders came to India by an indirect route. They did not come through the Khyber Pass. After crossing the Hindu-Kush, they entered the northern borders of Gedrosia and then entered into the Indus Valley through the Bolan Pass. In India, the Sakas adapted themselves to their new environments and began to adopt Indian names and religious beliefs. They entered into matrimonial relations with the Indians.

On the basis of the information got from coins, two or more lines of Saka kings ruling over the northern, north-western and western parts of India have been recognised by scholars. Some of the Saka chiefs are known from Kharoshthi and Brahmi inscriptions. The two main royal lines of the Sakas known from the coins are those of Maues in the Punjab and its adjoining lands and of Vonones and his associates in Arachosia or Kandhar and Gedrosia and Drangiana or Baluchistan regions. Maues and probably Azes are mentioned in a few Kharoshthi inscriptions. However, neither Vonones nor any of his direct associates is mentioned in any Brahmi or Kharoshthi inscription. It is possible that Maues and Vonones were roughly contemporary rulers. The view of Dr. V. A. Smith was that Maues and Vonones were Parthians by race. Dr. J. N. Banerjea concedes that there are some Parthian elements associated with those rulers. The names Vonones I and Vonones II are Parthian names. The title of "King of Kings" prefixed to the names of the kings belonging to the Vonones and Maues groups is also Parthian.

**Maues.** Maues ruled from about 20 B.C. to 22 A.D. He cut off his relations with the 'Great King of Kings' of east Iran. He extended Saka suzerainty over large parts of North-Western India. He also took up the title of "Great King of Kings". The occupation of Gandhara by Maues is suggested by the Taxila inscription. By his conquests, Maues drove a wedge between the two Indo-Greek kingdoms. The Sakas extended their power up to Mathura during his reign.

**Azes.** We learn from coins that Maues was succeeded by Azes. He ruled from about 5 B.C. to 30 A.D. It is possible that Azes was

the son-in-law of Maues. He not only ruled over the territory of Maues but also extirpated the independent rule of the house of Euthydemus.

*Azilises.* Azilises was the son of Azes. For some time, he ruled jointly with his father and after his death, he became the sole ruler. He ruled from about 28 A.D. to 40 A.D.

We have come across some coins which bear the names of both Azilises and Azes. It is contended that Azes ruled from about 35 A.D. to 79 A.D. It is also suggested that Azilises I was succeeded by Azes whose successor was Azilises II. Azes I is considered to have been the founder of the Vikram Era starting from 58 B.C.

About the beginning of the first century A.D., the Parthian Empire had under its control Herat, the country of Anauoi, Drangiana, Sakastan and Arachosia in the east.

*Gondophernes.* Azes II was succeeded by Gondophernes or Gondophares. His name indicates that he was a Parthian by race. We learn from coins that Gondophernes with one Gudda was ruling, probably somewhere in Arachosia, as the viceregal associate of Orthagnes, before he became king himself. Gondophernes gradually extended his power in different directions and became an emperor. He used some of the coin-types of Orthagnes which may point to his control over east Iran. It is maintained that he conquered certain districts of the Kushan empire. His success against the Sakas in India was more conspicuous.

The name of Gondophernes is associated with St. Thomas, the apostle of the Parthians. However, the genuineness of the tradition is not accepted by scholars. According to Dr. V.A. Smith, the whole story is pure mythology. The geography is as mythical as the tale itself. Its interest in the eyes of the historians of India is confined to the fact that it proves that the real Indian king, Gondophernes was remembered after his death and associated in popular belief with the apostolic mission to the Indians and so with the Parthians. It is permissible to believe that a Christian mission actually visited the Indo-Parthians of the North-Western Frontier during his reign, whether or not that mission was conducted by St. Thomas in person. It is to be noted that there is no trace of the subsequent existence of a Christian community in the dominions ruled by Gondophernes.

Abdagases seems to have been the immediate successor of Gondophernes. He was succeeded by Pacores. His reign was very short. We come across the coins of another king named Sanabares. The end of the Parthian rule in India is marked by several groups of small coins. However, foreign domination of the Northern and North-Western parts of India did not end with the extinction of the Parthians. The latter were succeeded by the Kushas.

*The Saka Satrapal Houses.* The Indian governors of the Saka rulers were called Kshatrapas. This term was probably borrowed from the old Persian title of Kshatrapavan meaning a provincial governor. There were always two satraps in every province, viz.,

a junior satrap called Kshatrapa and a senior satrap called Mahakshatrapa. The relation between the two was similar to that between the Rajan or king and the Yuvaraja or the heir-apparent. There were many Saka satrapal houses in different parts of India. However, we can group them into two categories, viz., Northern satraps of Taxila and Mathura and the Western satraps of Maharashtra and Ujjain.

*Nahapana.* There is nothing important about the Northern satraps of Taxila and Mathura except their names. As regards the Western satraps of Maharashtra, the name of Bhumaka comes first of all, although not much is known about him. *Nahapana* was the greatest of the Bhumaka line, although there is no evidence of the relationship between Bhumaka and Nahapana. We learn from coins and inscriptions that Nahapana conquered Maharashtra. However, his rule was confined to Broach, Kathiawar, Ajmer and Pushkara. A large number of silver coins of Nahapana have been found in Maharashtra. That shows that he must have got Maharashtra under his control. It is possible that Nahapana was turned out from Maharashtra by Gautamiputra Satakarni. The rule of Nahapana, although short, was full of events. There were wars, expeditions and charitable benefactions.

As regards the Western Satraps of Ujjain, the earliest member of this house was Yasamatika. His son was Chastana. According to Prof. Dubreuil, Chastana started his rule in 78 A.D. and was the founder of the Saka Era. This view is not accepted because the earliest known date of Chastana is the year 52 which is accepted by all scholars as belonging to the Saka Era. That brings us to 130 A.D. Chastana seems to have ruled jointly with his grandson Rudradamana in 130 A.D. The name of Rudradamana's father was Jayadamana.

*Rudradamana.* Rudradamana, the grandson and successor of Chastana, was the most outstanding Saka satrap of Ujjain. We are lucky in having a lot of information about this great man from his Junagadh Rock Inscription. This Inscription is dated 72 and it helps us to fix the reign of Rudradamana near about 150 A.D. It is stated in the inscription that Rudradamana won for himself the title of Mahakshatrapa. It appears that the fortunes of the house of Chastana had received a temporary setback but Rudradamana was able to restore the glory of the house by his efforts and also took up the title of Mahakshatrapa. There is a reference to his war with Satakarni, Lord of the South, whom he is stated to have defeated twice and then won him as his son-in-law. It is also stated that Rudradamana fought against the proud and valiant Yaudheyas and also defeated them.

The extent of the territory of Rudramana is shown in the inscription mentioned above. It included Akara (East Malwa), Avanti (West Malwa), Anupa, Anarta (North Kathiawar), Saurashtra (South Kathiawar), Svabhra (the region on the Sabarmati), Maru (probably Marwar), Kachha (Cutch), Sindhu (that part of Sindh which lay west of the Lower Indus), Sauvira (east of the Lower



Indus). Kukura (North Kathiawar). Aparanta (North Konkan) and Nishada (West Vindhya and Aravali).

It is stated in the inscription that the Sudarsana lake which had existed from the time of Chandragupta Maurya and Asoka burst in the time of Rudradamana. There was a lot of destruction. Sudarsana became Dardarsana. Rudradamana did not spare any money or energy in reconstructing the dam as quickly as possible. We are told that Rudradamana spent all the money on the repair of the dam from his own pocket. Thinking the task impossible, the Council of Ministers had refused to sanction money from the public treasury. Rudradamana behaved like a strictly constitutional ruler. It is stated in the inscription that Rudradamana was *chosen as protector by all the castes*.

We have a lot of information from this inscription regarding the personal qualities of Rudradamana. He was very much worried about the good of his subjects. This is proved by the fact that he spent all the money required for the repair of the Sudarsana lake from his own pocket. He did not impose any special tax or forced labour or benevolences from the people for that purpose. He carried on his government with the advice and consent of his Council of Ministers (Sachivaih). The latter possessed all the qualities (Amatya-Guna-Samudyuktiah). Before becoming the ruler, Rudradamana had learnt grammar, polity, finance, music, logic, etc. He is stated to have taken a vow that he would not kill men except in battle and that vow he kept to the end of his life.

We do not know much about the successors of Rudradamana. They seem to have been non-entities. Excepting their names, they did not claim any achievement. Damajada or Damajadasari was the son and successor of Rudradamana. He was succeeded by Rudrasimha I who in turn was succeeded by Rudrasena I. The last Saka satrap of Ujjain was Rudrasena III who was defeated and killed by Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty.

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Majumdar, R. C. (Ed.) | : The Age of Imperial Unity.                |
| Narain, A. K.         | : The Indo-Greeks, 1957.                    |
| Rapson (Ed.)          | : Cambridge History of India, Vol. I.       |
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| Tarn, W. W.           | : The Greeks in Bactria and India.<br>1951. |

## CHAPTER XXIV

### RISE AND FALL OF THE KUSHANA EMPIRE

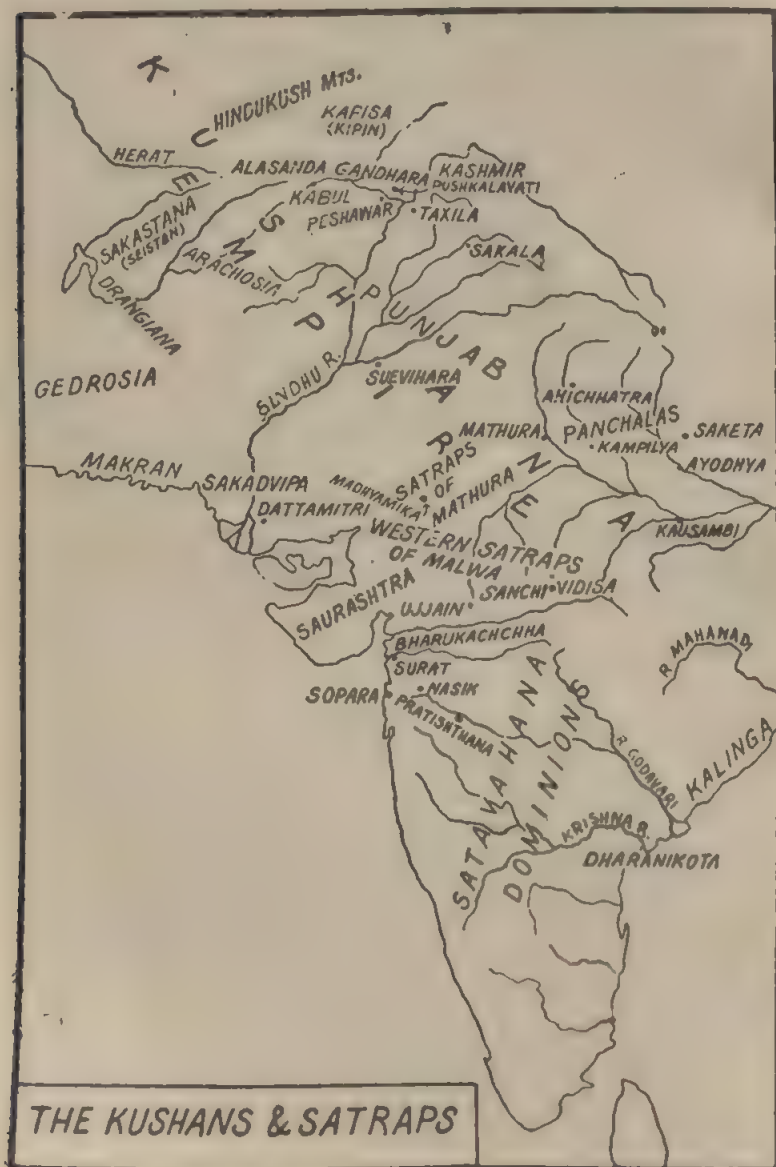
According to H. G. Rawlinson, "The Kushana period is one of the utmost importance in the history of Indian culture. During this period nascent Christianity met full-grown Buddhism in the academies and markets of Asia and Egypt, while both religions were exposed to the influences of surrounding paganism in many forms, and of the countless works of art which gave expression to the forms of polytheism. The ancient religion of Persia contributed to the ferment of human thought, excited by improved facilities for international communication and by the incessant clash of rival civilisations." Buddhism itself was transformed from a highly individualistic philosophy of life into a world religion, and spread along the Central Asia trade routes, through Khotan, where India and China meet, to China itself. It was a time of intense artistic and literary activity. Buddha and the Hindu deities appear for the first time in human guise, and Indian art, by virtue of its contact with Hellenistic Asia, acquires a fresh impetus. New literary forms come to light: the drama and the court epic make their appearance and classical Sanskrit is evolved. The Kushana period is a fitting prelude to the Age of the Guptas". (*India, A Short Cultural History*, p. 104).

*Rise of the Kushanas.* The Chinese historians tell us that the Kushanas were a section of the *Yueh-chi* race. The Yueh-chi were nomadic hordes and inhabited the borders of modern China. In the middle of the second century B.C., they came into conflict with a neighbouring barbarian tribe known as *Hiung-nu*. The king of the Yueh-chi was defeated by the Hiung-nu and killed. The latter made a drinking vessel of his skull. The Yueh-chi, under the leadership of the widow of the slain Yueh-chi king, refused to submit to the victors and decided to move westwards in search of fresh pasture-grounds. The number of persons who migrated is estimated to be between six and ten lakhs. While they were moving, the Yueh-chi came into conflict with another smaller horde known as the *Wu-sun*, which occupied the basin of the Ili river and its tributaries. The Wu-sun were no match for the Yueh-chi and consequently they were defeated and their king was killed. At this time, the Yueh-chi were divided into two sections. Those Yueh-chi who settled on the border of Tibet came to be known as the Little Yueh-chi and those Yueh-chi who continued the westward march, came to be known as the Great Yueh-chi.

The Yueh chi had next to meet the Sakas who were occupying the territories east of the Wu-sun and to the North of the Jaxaries. The Sakas tried to defend themselves but were defeated. They were forced to vacate their pasture-grounds in favour of the Yueh-chi who

occupied them. The Sakas had to migrate in search of new homes and they made their way into India through the northern passes.

For about 15 or 20 years, the Yueh-chi remained undistributed in the territory occupied by them. However, they were defeated by the son of the Wu-sun chieftain (who had been killed by the Yueh-chi with the help of the Hiung-nu who had brought up the infant son under their care. The Yueh-chi were driven out from the lands



which they had snatched from the Sakas and were forced to resume their march. They occupied the valley of the Oxus and reduced to subjection its peaceful inhabitants. It is possible that the domination of the Yueh-chi extended over Bactria to the South of the Oxus. In course of time, the Yueh-chi lost their nomadic habits and settled down. This must have happened about 10 B.C.

*Kadphises I (c. 15—65 A.D.).* Kadphises I or Kujula Kadphises or Kozola Kadaphes was the first Kushana king about whom we know something definite. The Yueh-chi had been divided into five sections, viz., Hieu-mi, Chaung-mo, Kuei-Shaung, Hi-thum and Koa-fu and Kadphises I who was the chief of the Kushana section, succeeded in imposing his authority on the other sections and thereby established himself as the sole monarch of the Yueh-chi nation.

According to Dr. Smith, Kadphises I made himself the master of Ki-pin (Gandhara) and Kabul territory. He also consolidated his power in Bactria. He also attacked the Parthians. His empire extended from the frontiers of Persia to the Indus or perhaps to the Jhelum. The Indo-Greek and Indo-Parthian rulers were completely defeated in the time of Kadphises I. The latter died at the age of 80.

The view of Dr. Smith was that Kadphises I ruled from 40 A.D. to about 70 A.D. However, the view of Dr. Mookerjee as given in "*Ancient India*" and D. C. Sircar as given in the *Age of Imperial Unity* is that Kadphises I ruled from about 15 A.D. to 95 A.D. and it is the latter view which is accepted in this book.

*Kadphises II (c. 65—75 A.D.).* Kadphises I was succeeded by his son Kadphises II who is also known as Vima, Wima or Wema Kadphises in the coins. The view of Smith was that the reign of Kadphises II extended from about 70 A.D. to 110 A.D. This view is not accepted by writers like Dr. Raychaudhuri in *Political History of Ancient India*, Dr. Mookerjee in *Ancient India*, D. C. Sircar in the *Age of Imperial Unity* and Dr. J. N. Banerjee and Prof. Jagan Nath in *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. II. Their view is that Kadphises II ruled from about 65 A.D. to 75 A.D.

According to Dr. Smith, Kadphises II completed the conquest of northern India which was started by his predecessor. It is also contended by Smith that Kadphises II conquered the Punjab and a considerable part of the Gangetic Valley, probably as far as Banaras. It is probable that he extended his powers to the mouths of the Indus and swept away the petty Parthian princes. The conquered Indian provinces were administered by a Military Viceroy. Dr. Smith also tells us that General Pan-chao led an army from victory to victory up to the boundaries of the Roman Empire. The king of Khotan made a submission and his example was followed by many others, including the king of Kashgar. Kadphises II was alarmed at the advance of the Chinese. He asserted his equality with the Chinese emperor by demanding a Chinese princess in marriage. The envoy who had been sent by Kadphises II was arrested by General Pan-chao. Kadphises II accepted the challenge of General Pan-chao and sent an army of 70,000 cavalry under the command of his Viceroy named Sic. Probably the army of Sic advanced by the



Tashkurghan Pass. It had to meet innumerable difficulties and no wonder was totally defeated. Kadphises II was to pay tribute to China. Smith also says that the Indian Embassy which offered congratulations to the Roman emperor Trajan was probably sent by Kadphises II.

However, the above view of Dr. Smith is not accepted by Dr. Raychaudhuri, Dr. Mookerjee and many others. If we do not accept the period assigned by Dr. Smith to Kadphises II, some of the events of his reign as given by Dr. Smith have also to be fixed somewhere else. It is pointed out that there is no evidence in support of the proposition that Kadphises II began to rule in 78 A.D. and also started the Saka Era. We have not come across any inscription or coin of Kadphises II which contains any date which is referable to an era of his institution. On the other hand, we have positive evidence that Kanishka did start an era and his method of dating was continued by his successors. We have dates ranging probably from the year 1 to 99.

It is pointed out that the conquests of Kadphises I and Kadphises II opened up the path of commerce between China, the Roman Empire and India. Roman gold began to pour into India as India enjoyed a favourable balance of trade. Indian silks, spices and gems were too much in demand in the Roman Empire. That demand continued till the import of Indian goods was banned by legislation.

There is a lot of controversy about the fact whether the Kanishka group succeeded the Kadphises group or the Kadphises group succeeded the Kanishka group. However, Dr. Smith, Dr. Raychaudhuri and Dr. Mookerjee accept the view that the Kanishka group came after the Kadphises group. It is pointed out that if we carefully study the series of coins issued successively by the alien rulers of India upto Vasudeva I, it becomes clear that the Kadphises coins were issued immediately after those of the Sakas and the Pahlavas. The coins of Kanishka and Huvishka can be shown to have for their prototypes the money of Kadphises II. The practice of issuing bilingual and bscriptural coins, introduced by the Indo-Greek kings, was continued throughout the Saka-Pahlava period up to the time of Kadphises II. Kanishka discontinued it and Huvishka and Vasudeva mainly followed Kanishka regarding the mode of issuing coins. The obverse devices of the money of Kadphises II influenced those of the coins of Kanishka and his successors. The coins definitely prove that the Kadphises group of kings preceded the Kanishka group.

*Kanishka I: Date of Accession.* Kanishka was the greatest of the Kushana emperors, but there is no unanimity among scholars regarding the date of his accession to the throne. According to Dr. Fleet, Kanishka reigned before the Kadphises group and was the founder of that era which commenced in 58 B.C. This view of Dr. Fleet was accepted by Cunningham, Dowson, Franke and Kennedy. But the discoveries of Marshall and other information have demolished the old hypothesis. It can be proved beyond the shadow of doubt that Kanishka did not start the Vikram era. According to Huen-Tsang,

Kanishka ruled over Gandhara. But according to other Chinese evidence, Yin-mo-fu ruled over Gandhara about 50 B.C. Since the two could not rule over Gandhara at the same time and the period of Yin-mo-fu is certain, Kanishka must belong to some other period and not about 58 B.C. Hence, he could not have started the Vikram era which started in 58 B.C.

The view of Marshall, Sten Konow, Dr. Smith, Dr. Van Wijk and other scholars was that the rule of Kanishka began about 125 A.D. and ended in the second half of the second century A.D. The Junagadh inscription of Rudradamana says that Rudradamana was the ruler of the Lower Indus Valley. It is clearly stated that he was not under any ruler and he was the sovereign who was elected by the people. The Sui Vihar inscription also says that the empire of Kanishka included the Lower Indus Valley. As it is definitely known that Rudradamana was the ruler between 130 and 150 A.D., Kanishka could not be the ruler at the same time. His mastery over the Lower Indus Valley cannot be reconciled with the contemporary sovereignty of Rudradaman. Moreover, Kanishka's dates 1—23, Vasishka's dates 24—28, Huvishka's dates 31—60 and Vasudeva's dates 74—98 suggest a continuous reckoning. In other words, Kanishka was the originator of an era. However, we do not know of any era which was current in North-West India and which commences in the second century A.D.

Dr. R.C. Majumdar thinks that the era founded by Kanishka was the Traikutaka-Kalachouri-Chedi era of 248-49 A.D. However, this view cannot be maintained. The catalogues of the Chinese Tripitika state that An-Shih-Kao (148-170 A.D.) translated the Margabhumī Sutra of Sangharakṣa who was the chaplain of Kanishka. This shows conclusively that Kanishka flourished long before 170 A.D. and hence the view of Dr. Majumdar is untenable. The same criticism applies to the view of Sir R.G. Bhandarkar that Kanishka's accession took place in 278 A.D.

The view of Fergusson, Oldenberg, Thomas, R.D. Banerjee, Rapson and many other scholars like Dr. Raychaudhuri is that Kanishka was the founder of the Saka era and consequently he ascended the throne in 78 A.D. Some objections have been raised against this view but on critical examination, those do not seem to hold the ground.

It is contended that if we admit that Kadphises I reigned about 50 A.D. and Kanishka founded the Saka era in 78 A.D., we are left with only 28 years for the rest of the reign of Kadphises I and the whole of the reign of Kadphises II. In the first place, the date 50 A.D. for Kadphises I is not certain. Even if the same is accepted as correct, the period of 28 years is not too short in view of the fact that Kadphises II succeeded an octogenarian. When Kadphises I died "at the age of more than eighty", his son must have been an old man. It is therefore improbable that "his reign was protracted." Hence, the date 78 A.D. for Kanishka's succession is tenable.

It is contended that Sir John Marshall's discovery of the inscription from the Chira Stupa of Taxila is dated 136 which in the

Vikram Era, corresponds to 79 A.D. Probably the king mentioned is Kadphises I and certainly not Kanishka. But it might be pointed out that the use of the word "Devaputra" in the inscription in question does not necessarily imply that it refers to Kadphises I. This title is characteristic of Kanishka group and not of the Kadphises group. The omission of the personal name of the Kushana king does not necessarily imply that the first Kushana king is meant. In several inscriptions of the time of Kumaragupta and Buddhagupta, the king is referred to simply as Gupta Nripa. Likewise, the title of Devaputra can also apply to Kanishka.

Sten Konow has shown that the inscriptions of the Kanishka era and those of the Saka era are not dated in the same fashion and consequently Kanishka cannot be said to have started the Saka era. However, the same scholar himself admits that all the inscriptions of Kanishka era are not dated in the same fashion. There is always a variation to suit the needs of the locality and the time. In the Kharoshthi inscriptions, Kanishka and his successors recorded the dates in the same way as their Saka-Pahlava predecessors, giving the name of the month and the day within the month. On the other hand, in their Brahmi records Kanishka and his successors adopted the ancient Indian way of dating. We cannot conclude from this that the Kharoshthi dates of Kanishka's inscriptions are not to be referred to the same era to which dates of the Brahmi records are to be ascribed. If Kanishka adopted two different way of dating, he also could have adopted a third method to suit the local conditions in Western India. It is not improbable that just as Kanishka in the border-land used the old Saka-Pahlava method and in Hindustan proper used the ancient Indian way of dating prevalent there, likewise, in Western India his officers added the Paksha to suit the custom in that part of the country.

It is clear from above that Kanishka was the founder of the Saka era which started in 78 A.D. and also ascended the throne in 78 A.D. and not in about 120 A.D. as maintained by other writers.

*Wars of Kanishka.* When Kanishka came to the throne, his empire consisted of Afghanistan, a large part of Sindh, portions of Parthia, Bactria and the Punjab. His predecessor had suffered a defeat at the hands of the Chinese. Kanishka was confident of his military strength and he would like to have revenge for the same. No wonder, he fought many wars during his reign.

According to Dr. Smith, Kanishka can be given credit for having completed in his earlier years the subjugation and annexation of Kashmir. However, we do not have any details of his war with the ruler of Kashmir. We are told that Kanishka had great preference for Kashmir. He erected a large number of monuments and also founded a town known as Kanishkpura which is now represented by the village of Kanispor. The passage in the Rajatarangini of Kalhana is to the following effect: "Then there were in this land three kings, called Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka, who built three towns named after them. That wise king Jushka, who built Jushka-pura with its Vihara, was also the founder of Jayasvami-pura. These



kings, who were given to acts of piety, though descended from the Turushka race, built at Sushkaletra and other places Mathas, chaityas, and similar structures."

There is no reliable evidence to show that Kanishka waged any war against the rulers of Magadha. However, it is stated in the Buddhist tradition that after the capture of Pataliputra, Asvaghosha, the great Buddhist philosopher, fell into the hands of Kanishka and he brought that sage with him. There is no doubt that Asvaghosha was one of the luminaries of the court of Kanishka. From this, it is inferred that Kanishka must have conquered a portion of Magadha. This view is also supported by the fact that a very large number of coins of Kanishka have been found from Ghazipur and Gorakhpur. If Kanishka had not been in control of that area, so many of his coins would not have been found there.

Kanishka is said to have waged war against the western satraps of Ujjain. Most probably, Chashtan was the Saka ruler who was defeated by the Kushana ruler. The result of his war was that the Sakas acknowledged the supremacy of Kanishka and also surrendered a portion of Malwa to him. According to Dr. Smith, Kanishka was engaged in a successful war with the Parthians. He was attacked by the king of that nation who is described by tradition as "very stupid and with a violent temper." It is possible that the prince mentioned above was either Chosroes (Khusru), or one of the rival kings who disputed the possession of the Parthian throne.

Kanishka was responsible for the conquest of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan. Dr. Smith points out that Kadphises II had been unsuccessful in such an attempt, but Kanishka succeeded on account of the change in circumstances. The death of Pan-chao, the Chinese General, must have weakened the Chinese side. Kanishka not only defeated the Chinese but also demanded the surrender of hostages. It is stated that one of the hostages was the son of the emperor of China. However, this view is not accepted.

According to Dr. Raychaudhuri, Kanishka completed the Kushana conquest of Upper India and ruled over a wide realm which extended from Kapisa, Gandhara, and Kashmir to Banaras. According to Dr. Smith the empire of Asoka extended all over North-Western India, probably as far South as the Vindhya, as well as over the remote regions beyond the Pamir Passes. Kanishka ruled over this vast empire from his capital at Peshawar or Purushpur.

*Kanishka's Religion.* The Buddhist writers tell us that before his conversion to Buddhism, Kanishka had no faith either in right or in wrong. However, this view is not accepted. The truth is that before his conversion to Buddhism, he believed in a large number of gods. This is proved by the fact that Kanishka's earlier coins bear the figures of a large number of gods. The previous system was given up later on and Buddhism became prominent. We do not know the exact date of the conversion of Kanishka. But probably it was after his remaining on the throne for some years. Most



probably, Asoka had won over the heart of Kanishka to such an extent that he gave up his old religion and became a Buddhist. It is true that Kanishka became a Buddhist, but that does not mean that he became indifferent towards other religions. We find Kanishka visiting the gods of other religions in the same way as he cared for the Buddhist faith.

Like Asoka, Kanishka did a lot for the spread of Buddhism. Many old monasteries were repaired and many new ones were also built. A lot of money was distributed among the Buddhist monks for their maintenance. A large number of stupas were set up in the memory of the Buddha. Monasteries were also sent to foreign countries. It was with the help of these monasteries that Buddhism spread to China, Japan, Korea and Central Asia. Kanishka became a great patron of the Gandhara School of Art. The sculptors and painters of his period became the most active propagandists of Buddhism. Statues of Buddha were prepared in bulk. The result was that the number of worshippers of Buddhism multiplied.

Kanishka called the Fourth Buddhist Council which was attended by about 500 monks, including Vasumitra, Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna and Parsva. This Council was held under the presidency of Vasumitra and Asvaghosha was appointed the vice-president. There is no unanimity of opinion with regard to the place where Council was held. According to one view, the Buddhist Council was held at Kushanvara near Srinagar. The other view is that it was held at Bhrumbar in the Punjab. The main purpose for which the Buddhist Council was called was to settle the disputed points in Buddhism of that time. The whole of the Buddhist literature was thoroughly examined. Voluminous commentaries on the three Pitakas were also prepared. Most of the comments were collected in a book known as *Mahavibhasha*. This book is the greatest work on Buddhist philosophy. It is described as an encyclopaedia of Buddhism. The decisions of the Council were written on sheets of copper and were placed in stone chests and deposited in a stupa built specially for that purpose. We are told by Taranath, the Tibetan historian, that the Buddhist Council settled the dispute between 18 schools of Buddhism which were all recognized as orthodox.

There was a transformation of Buddhism in the time of Kanishka. The old Hinayana form of Buddhism was replaced by a new form of religion. Formerly, the Buddha was worshipped by symbols, but under Mahayanism, he came to be worshipped in the form of a statue. Formerly, emphasis was put on good actions and now emphasis was put on worship of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. The new cult of the Bodhisattvas was introduced under Mahayanism and the Bodhisattvas were to act as the intermediaries between the Buddha on one side and worshippers on the other. Formerly, Pali was used for religious books of Buddhism and now its place was taken by Sanskrit. The vast empire of Kanishka in Central Asia must have helped the growth of Mahayanism.

*Patron of Art and Learning.* Kanishka was a great patron of art and learning. No wonder, large quantities of Buddhist sculpture of his reign have been found and some were produced during the reign of Kanishka. The greatest library house at Kanishka's court was *Indraprastha*, where works have been ascribed to those of Maitreya, Grotius, Kant and Nietzsche, etc., and variety. Aśoka was a great philosopher, peace-loving and tolerant. He was a great artist too. He was the author of the *Buddhist Sūtra* and *Sūtra-sūtra*. The *Buddhist Sūtra* is the life story of Buddha in Sanskrit poetry. It is considered to be the epic of the Buddhists and is compared to the Ramayan of Vālmiki.

Another great figure of the court of Kanishka was *Nāgārjuna*. He is compared to Martin Luther. He is called him "one of the four lights of the world". He was not only a philosopher but also a scientist. *Nāgārjuna* originated the theory of relativity in his great work called *Mahāyāna Sūtra*. He is rightly called the Indian Einstein.

Another great teacher of the court of Kanishka was Vasubandhu who presided over the 4th sessions of the Fourth Buddhist Council. He was the author of *Mahāyāna Sūtra* which is a commentary on the Tripitaka of the Buddhists. It has rightly been called an **Encyclopaedia of Buddhism**.

Another important figure of the court of Kanishka was Charak. He was the famous author of the great book called *Susruta* on medicine.

Mathara, a politician of unknown intelligence, was a minister of Kanishka. These and other worthies like the Greek engineer Apollonius "played a leading part in the religious, literary, scientific, philosophical and artistic activities of the reign."

Kanishka was a great builder. His important buildings and works of art are found in Peshawar, Mathura, Kanishkapura and Taxila. The Sirkh city of Taxila with its hall, monasteries and buildings was founded by him. Mathura became a great centre of art in the time of Kanishka. The city was made beautiful by Kanishka with a large number of monasteries, statues and sculptures. An important relic of this period is a statue of Kanishka which is headless. Reference has already been made to Shah-jī-ki-dheri of Kanishka at Peshawar.

*Estimate of Kanishka.* Kanishka was undoubtedly one of the greatest kings of ancient India. He was a great warrior, a great empire-builder, and a great patron of art and learning. No Indian ruler has ruled over such a vast empire in Central Asia as was done by Kanishka. He was the only Indo-Asiatic king whose territories extended beyond the Pamirs. No wonder, Kanishka occupied a unique position in the history of India.

Kanishka was not only a great conqueror but also a great administrator. It is worthy of note that there was not a single revolt during his reign.

He patronised art and learning. He was able to collect in his court a large number of learned people. A reference has already been made to his buildings.

An attempt has been made to compare Kanishka with Asoka. It is pointed out that both of them were cruel and blood-thirsty before they came to the throne and before their conversion to Buddhism. Both of them were completely transformed under the influence of Buddhism. Asoka called the Buddhist Council at Pataliputra and Kanishka called the Buddhist Council in Kashmir. Both of them devoted themselves whole-heartedly to the spread of Buddhism. If Asoka spread Buddhism in India, Ceylon and the neighbouring countries, Kanishka spread the same to Tibet, China and Japan. What was left unfinished by Asoka was completed by Kanishka. For this reason, Kanishka is called second Asoka. However, it is pointed out that the comparison between the two is not happy. Asoka belongs to the Hinayana school but Kanishka belongs to the Mahayana school. Kanishka did not adopt the principle of non-violence in his life and he continued to fight to the end of his life. Kanishka is not so great a personality as Asoka is. Kanishka is certainly less noble, less great and less known. To call Kanishka a second Asoka is to underestimate the greatness and services of Asoka who was not only a king but also a Rishi.

*Downfall of the Kushana Empire.* The mighty Kushana empire reached its high water-mark in the time of Kanishka I. Then the Kushanas were feared not only in India but also in Central Asia. However, that greatness was not maintained by the successors of Kanishka I. Vasishka, the successor of Kanishka I, is stated to have ruled only over Mathura and its surrounding regions. Probably he had the Sanchi region also under his control. As no inscription of Vasishka has been discovered in any other part of India, it is concluded that he lost control over the distant parts of the Kushana empire. No cause is given for the eclipse of the Kushana power during his reign but it is contended that the collapse was merely a temporary one. Vasishka was succeeded by Huvishka and the latter is stated to have recovered the fortunes of the Kushanas during his long and prosperous rule lasting for more than 30 years. We have found his inscriptions not only in the Mathura region but also in North-West Frontier of India and also in Eastern Afghanistan. It is contended that the region lying about 30 miles to the west of Kabul was included in the empire of Huvishka who is described as Maharajdhiraja Huvishka. Kanishka II is also stated to have ruled at the same time as a contemporary of Huvishka.

Huvishka was succeeded by Vasudeva I. We do not have any clear evidence with regard to the exact limits of his empire but probably his rule did not extend beyond a part of modern Uttar Pradesh. Almost all the Brahmi inscriptions have been found in Mathura and its neighbourhood. It appears that the imperial Kushanas of India had by this time lost their hold over the extreme northern and north-western parts of India. It is possible that the local Kushanas and other chiefs took advantage of the weakness of the

central power and made themselves independent. The last known date of Vasudeva is about 176-77 A.D. and soon after his death the mighty Kushana empire melted away.

It is practically impossible to give an orderly account of the successors of Vasudeva I. Our only source of information are the coins and they do not give us any definite information. However, it is maintained that Vasudeva was succeeded by Kanishka III who ruled for about 30 years. He was succeeded by Vasudeva II who, according to Dr. Altekar, ruled from about 210 to 230 A.D.

The final break-up of the Kushana empire seems to have been completed during the reigns of the successors of Vasudeva I. Most of the territories in the interior of India were lost to the Indian chiefs. Most important of them were the Nagas, the Yaudheyas, Malavas and the Kunindas. The evidence from the inscriptions tells us that the Nagas came into prominence more than a century before the reign of Chandragupta II. The early Nagas held control over Padmavati and Mathura which was formerly included in the Kushana empire. They are stated to have performed 10 Asvamedha sacrifices. The Puranas tell us that 7 kings had already ruled at Mathura and 9 at Padmavati when the Guptas came to power. All this must have been done by the Nagas at the expense of the Kushanas and that partly explains the disappearance of the Kushana empire.

According to Dr. Altekar, the Yaudheyas, a martial tribe, had also a hand in the destruction of the Kushana empire. Their rule over the territory lying on the banks of the Sutlej as far as the borders of Bahawalpur State, lasted for more than a century. The copper coins of the Yaudheyas are similar to those of the Kushanas. It appears that those coins were struck by the Yaudheyas after throwing off the yoke of the Kushanas.

The Malavas and the Kunindas also got their independence and became prominent after successfully revolting against the authority of the Kushanas. They divided between themselves the territories formerly held by the Kushanas. The capital of the Malavas was known as Malavanagar in Rajputana. The Kunindas occupied the territory between the Yamuna and the Sutlej and the upper courses of the Beas and the Sutlej.

It is not possible to say anything with certainty with regard to the successors of Kanishka III and Vasudeva II in North-Western India, but it appears that the western and central Punjab and territory on the other side of the Indus were subject to two or more tribes whose names have been read on the coins as the Sakas and Shiladas. According to the late R.D. Banerji, the Sakas ruled in Gandhara and we have found a large number of their coins near Peshawar. According to the same writer, the Shiladas ruled over the territory to the east of the Indus. Dr. V. A. Smith describes these rulers as sundry chiefs ruling in the Punjab and the neighbouring countries in the 3rd and 4th centuries A.D. It is not possible to define the exact relationship between the Sakas and Shiladas on one hand and the Kushanas on the other.



Another cause of the downfall of the Kushana empire was the rise of the Sassanian power in Iran. The Sassanian empire was founded in 225-26 A.D. by Ardeshir I and from the very beginning its rulers turned their attention towards the East. Ardeshir I came as far as Khorasan. It is stated that the Kushana Shah or ruler sent his envoy to Ardeshir I to acknowledge his suzerainty. Gradually, the Sassanian power extended towards Seistan. In course of time, it spread from there over parts of western and central India and the north-western regions and border-lands of India. The Sassanian expansion towards western and central India was made at the expense of the Western Satraps and the Satavahanas. Not only Bactria, but also the whole of north-western India became important provinces in the eastern division of the Sassanian empire. An attempt was made by the Kushanas to become independent of the Sassanians in the time of Emperor Varhram II (276-93 A.D.) but that seems to have failed. It is obvious that the rising power of the Sassanians gave a severe blow to the declining strength of the Kushanas in the northern and western parts of India and beyond.

It appears that in course of time, the Kushanas on the border of India and also in the Punjab were thoroughly intermingled with other tribes. They continued their chequered existence even up to the time of Samudragupta and the latter forced them to submit to him. They are described in the Allahabad pillar inscription as *Daivaputra Shahi Shahamushahi*. In the later part of the 4th or early in the 5th century A.D., the Kushanas got a new title, namely, Kidara. Their existence in certain parts of the Punjab, North-Western Frontier Province and Kashmir in the 5th century is proved by the discovery of a large number of coins. However, it is difficult to say anything about the exact period of their rule, their order of succession and even the limits of their territory. Thus, it was that the Kushana empire faded away.

It is pointed out that one of the causes of the downfall of the Kushanas was the division of power between the joint rulers among the Kushanas. Huvishka and Kanishka II ruled at the same time. We are told that associated rulers enjoyed imperial titles and privileges. Azes I and Azilises, Azilises and Azes II used the same titles on their joint coins. This method was not conducive at all to the maintenance of a strong power.

Thus it was that the great Kushana empire disappeared from history.

*India under the Kushanas : Administration.* A critical study of the coins and inscriptions of the Kushanas helps us to have an idea of India under the Kushanas. We find that the administrative systems of the Kushanas had certain foreign elements in it and certain Indian elements. The important foreign element was the government by Satraps. The latter were the Viceroys or Governors of the Provinces. There were some functionaries who had foreign names. The name Strategos stood for a General or Military Governor. The name Meridach stood for District Magistrate. The officers called Amatyas and Mahasenapati were officers of Indian origin. The officers having foreign names were stationed in the

north-west, while officers having Indian names were stationed in the interior.

Kingship was the prevailing type of polity, although there are references to republics also. The Kushana rulers took up such titles as Mahisvara, Devaputra, Kaiser and Shahi-Shahanushahi. There was a tendency to deify ancestral kings. The Mathura inscription of Huvishka refers to a Deva-Kula or a shrine where the statue of "the grand-father of Kanishka" was installed. There was a strange system of two kings ruling at the same time during the Kushana period. We are told that Kanishka II and Huvishka ruled jointly. It is possible that this institution was borrowed from the Indo-Greeks. The Satraps in India were called Mahakshatrapas and Kshatrapas. They were practically independent.

The Kushana empire was divided into various units and those were Rashtra, Ahara, Janapada and Desa or Vishaya.

*Economic Condition.* India had brisk trade with foreign countries. The establishment of law and order in the country and the absence of foreign invasions must have made the people prosperous. Commodities were sent from different parts of the empire to foreign countries. There were land routes through the North-West and there were sea-routes from the West coast. India had a favourable balance of trade with the Roman Empire. Mommsen, the great historian, refers to the heavy drain of gold from Rome into India in payment of her imports from India. The drain was so much that Pliny, a Roman writer, lamented the flow of gold from his country to India. We are told that Roman ladies paraded themselves along the highways of Rome after clothing themselves with many folds of muslin from India. As a matter of fact, they became a menace to the morals of the city. Ultimately the government was forced to ban the import of muslin from India. The trade with Rome was done from the ports in Western and Southern India. This fact is proved by the discovery of a large number of Roman gold coins from these areas. These Roman coins influenced not only the Kushana currency but also the Gupta coinage.

*Coinage.* We have a large number of coins of the Kushana period. Kanishka I, Huvishka and Vasudeva issued gold and copper coins. They did not issue any silver coin. The later Kushanas struck only gold coins. A large number of silver and copper coins were issued by such autonomous tribes as the Malavas, Yaudheyas, Arjunayanas, Audumbaras, Kunindas, etc. We have also a large number of Roman gold coins which were imported into India for the payment of the Indian goods exported to Rome.

*Religious Condition.* It was during the Kushana period that Mahayanism made its appearance and the Buddhist religion was divided into two parts. Kanishka called the fourth Buddhist Council to settle the Buddhist doctrines. On the whole, Kushanas followed a policy of religious toleration. Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism flourished side by side. The deities found on the coins of the Kushana rulers are not only Brahmanical and Buddhist but also Greek, Sumerian, Zoroastrian, Elamite and Mithraic deities. The Kushana rulers did not make their personal religion the religion of

the state or the people. Kadphises II was a follower of Siva. Kanishka I was a follower of Buddhism. Vasudeva was a follower of Siva. The Kushana rulers were not partial towards any religion. It is to be noted that Sanskrit became the language of Buddhism during this period.

*Literature.* The Kushana rulers were great patrons of literature. A large number of standard books were written in Sanskrit. Asvaghosha wrote *Buddhacharita Saudarananda Kavya, Sariputra Prakarana and Vajrasuchi*. Nagarjuna wrote the *Prajna-Paramita Sutra-Sastra*. Vasumitra wrote the *Mahavibhasa Sastra*. Charaka wrote his famous treatise on Indian medicine.

*Gandhara Art.* The Kushana period is famous for the growth of Gandhara art. We come across a large number of specimens of this art in the region known in olden days as Gandhara of which Peshawar was the centre. This region was ruled over by a number of Greek princes for about 300 years and was a meeting ground of the East and the West. A large number of Graeco-Roman craftsmen seem to have been employed in the execution of the works of the Gandhara art and it is suggested that they found their way to Gandhara through the Parthian Empire. The most important centres of the Gandhara School were at Jalalabad, Hadda and Bamiyan in Afghanistan, the Swat Valley and the Peshawar District.

According to Dr. V. A. Smith, the Gandhara style is Graeco-Roman, based on the cosmopolitan art of Asia Minor and the Roman Empire as practised in the first three centuries of the Christian era. Much of the best work in that style was executed during the second century A.D. in the reigns of Kanishka and Huvishka. According to Paul Masson-Oursel and others, the Gandhara art is more Greek than Indian. It flourished probably from the 2nd half of the first century B.C. to the fifth century of the Christian era. According to N. R. Ray, the Gandhara art was active from about the middle of the first century B.C. to about the fifth century A.D.

The Gandhara art, though Hellenistic in form and execution, is certainly Indian in content and subject-matter. It follows the Indian tradition, both verbal and plastic, in every essential of its iconography. The whole conception of the seated Yogi and teacher is Indian. The Usnisa, the Mudras, the Asana etc. cannot be anything but Indian. All that is really Hellenistic is the plasticity and the treatment of the drapery. "Indian in theme, based on Indian tradition, it (Gandhara art) may even be said to be Indian to all intents and purposes, practically an offshoot of early Indian art transformed by powerful extraneous influence."

It is to be noted that the figures and their draperies of the Bimaran reliquary strongly recall Hellenistic ideals. The drapery is treated plastically as separate volume with its own weight. In the standing Buddha from Loriyan Tongar, the drapery is separated from the body, but it is so disposed that certain parts of the body are made visible from underneath the garment, the fold-lines of which remain agitated. This fact is more clear in the Buddha from



Charsadda. As time went on passing, transparent drapery with agitated fold-lines became more and more prominent. The figures of the first century A.D. are shorter in stature, stumpy in appearance and are treated in a rough manner. It appears that this degenerate art was partly due to Saka-Kushana influences from the Mathura region. From the 3rd century onwards, there was a revival of artistic forces that were current in the first century. The works from Hadda and Jaulian are characterised by an intensity of feeling, a telling realism, and an individuality of character. It was this phase of Gandhara art that was taken to Central Asia and China and which made it so famous in the world.

There has been a lot of difference of opinion among scholars with regard to the influence of the Gandhara art. According to Havell, the influence of the Hellenistic art upon Indian art was purely technical in character and was in no way the spiritual or intellectual force which shaped its ideals and ordered its form of expression. Magadha and not Gandhara was the spiritual centre of Mahayana Buddhism to which Kanishka gave imperial patronage. According to Will Durant, the Gandhara art had little influence upon the sculptural form and methods of India itself. When after some centuries of flourishing activity, the Gandhara school passed away, Indian art came to life again under Hindu rulers, took up the traditions left by the native artists of Bharhut, Amravati and Mathura and paid little attention to the Greek interlude at Gandhara. According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Gandhara art influenced to some extent, as it was itself influenced by the other schools of Indian art, but the nature and extent of this influence are matters of controversy. It failed, however, to penetrate deeply into the interior and had no share in the later development of Indian art. "But outside India the Gandhara School achieved a grand success by becoming the parent of the Buddhist art of Eastern or Chinese Turkistan, Mongolia, China, Korea and Japan."

The view of R. D. Banerjee was that the Gandhara art held sway for nearly five centuries and gradually influenced all other schools of India proper and the countries within its zone of influence. The relics of Indian art found in Central Asia and the Buddhist relics at Amravati in the Krishna District all betray the far-reaching influence of the Gandhara art. The most important contribution of the school to Indian sculpture is the fashioning of images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. The idea of depth was introduced by them into bas-reliefs. The Scythian monarchs continued these ideals and motifs. The Buddhist structures of Central Asia were all decorated with sculptures, painting and terra-cotta which proved the very deep hold which this school of art had. The style introduced by Gandhara art, depicting scenes from the life of Buddha, persisted in Northern India till the twelfth century A.D.

According to Paul Masson-Oursel and others, the Gandhara art exercised a two-fold influence. Its influence spread on one side through Central Asia to China and Japan and on the other in India itself and by the sea to the islands and Indo-China. The art of



Mathura seems to have been the first to come under the influence of Gandhara art.

*Suggested Readings*

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## CHAPTER XXV

### INDIA AND THE WESTERN WORLD

It is now generally agreed that India maintained her contact with the Western world centuries before the Christian era. The discoveries at Mohenjodaro show that there was intercourse between the Indus Valley and the Western world in about 3000 B.C. Mohenjodaro was probably a great port carrying on trade by sea with Ur and Kish and also with Egypt. There was intercourse by land as well.

According to the Jewish chronicles, there was a sea voyage to the East in the time of Solomon (c. 800 B.C.) and many articles were brought from there. The use of the Indian names for merchandise raises a strong presumption in favour of their Indian origin. The word 'Sindhu', found in the library of Assurbanipal, is used in the sense of Indian cotton. The Hebrew Karpas is derived from the Sanskrit Karpasa.

One of the Jataka stories makes a reference to a trading voyage to the kingdom of Baveru and scholars have interpreted it as the Indian form of Babylon. This points out to trade between India and Babylon.

The Boghaz Koi inscriptions of the fourteenth century B.C. contain the names of such deities as Mitra, Varuna, Indra etc. These names indicate that there was a very close contact between India and Western Asia before the 14th century B.C.

Dr. R. C. Majumdar points out that the information at our disposal does not enable us to determine the precise nature and extent of international relationship except the fact that there were trade and cultural relations between India and the Western world. There were practically no political ties.

*Persia.* Cyrus of Persia founded a great dynasty in 538 B.C. Darius, his successor, sent an expedition to India. The Indus Valley was annexed and was made a separate province of the Persian Empire. It paid an enormous annual tribute. As the Persian Empire extended to India and the Western world, the common subjection to a great empire must have brought India into close contact with the Western world.

*Greece.* The invasion of India by Alexander, the Great, is the next landmark in the history of the relations between India and the Western world. A large number of Greeks and Indians formed the retinue of Alexander and that must have afforded many opportunities to them to understand one another. Although the rule of the Greeks was very short, even that must have helped in bringing the

parties together. Although the successor of Alexander lost his Indian dominions, India continued to maintain close touch with the Western world through the kingdom of Seleucus which reached its border. Chandragupta Maurya, Bindusara and Asoka maintained intimate relations with the Greek kingdom of the West. Megasthenes and Daimachus lived in the Mauryan court as ambassadors. Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt, sent an envoy named Dionysius. All of these persons wrote valuable accounts of India. It can be presumed that the Mauryan emperors also must have sent their ambassadors to the above-mentioned countries. It is well-known that Bindusara requested the successors of Seleucus to send him some figs, sweet wine and a Sophist. This shows that there were cordial relations between the two countries. The XIIIth Rock Edict of Asoka refers to five Greek rulers, viz., Antiochus of Syria, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, Alexander of Epirus, Ptolemy of Egypt and Magas of Cyrene. It is contended that on account of the missionary activities of Asoka, his Dhamma was followed in the dominions of the above-mentioned rulers. Megasthenes tells us that there was a special department in the city of Pataliputra which looked after foreigners. This shows that a large number of foreigners must have been coming to India at that time.

*Egypt.* There were intimate relations between India and Egypt. It is pointed out that in the processions of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285—246 B.C.) were to be seen Indian women, Indian hunting dogs, Indian cows and Indian spices.

The foundation of the kingdom of Parthia was responsible for ending the direct political contact between India and the Greek world of the West. Antiochus, the Great, of Syria was the last Greek ruler of the West to maintain any direct contact with India. For more than 800 years, the Parthian empire served as a buffer state between India and the kingdoms of the West. However, Egypt was directly accessible by sea and the maritime intercourse between India and Egypt was maintained. The destruction of Tyre and the foundation of Alexandria by Alexander facilitated intercourse between the two countries. Ptolemy Philadelphus built a port and Berenice on the Egyptian coast of the Red Sea and connected the same with a road. There must have been direct voyages between India and Egypt. It is stated that in the 6th century B.C., Scylax was deputed by Darius to explore the Indus Valley. He sailed down the Indus river to the Indian Ocean and ultimately reached Egypt.

*The Roman Empire.* It was the policy of the Roman Empire during the first two centuries of the Christian era to encourage direct sea trade with India. It was also intended to lessen as far as possible trade with India through Parthia by the land route. However, the direct sea voyage was a long and tedious one. The reason was that the sailors were required to keep near the coast. However, this state of affairs was changed by a discovery made about 45 A.D. by Hippalus. The latter pointed out to the "existence of the monsoon winds, flowing regularly across the Indian Ocean" which could enable the ships to sail right across the Indian Ocean.

The result of this wonderful discovery was that the time required for a sea-voyage between India and Alexandria was very much shortened. There were certain other factors which helped the growth of trade and those were the foundation of the Roman empire and the great demand for articles of luxury from India in the Roman markets.

One or more Indian States sent embassies to Augustus. Other Indian embassies were sent to Rome during the first four centuries of the Christian era in the time of Trajan, Hadrian, Constantine, Julian and Justinian.

An important result of the development of commercial and political relations between India and the Roman Empire was that a large number of Indians and Romans visited each other's country. Alexandria was the meeting ground between the East and the West. No wonder, it was visited by a large number of Indian traders. The Indians formed a part of the settled population of Alexandria. Their presence there is attested by a grave-stone with wheel and Trisula (trident). Some Brahmans who visited Alexandria in 470 A.D. were the guests of Consul Saverus.

*Effect.* Whenever countries come into intimate contact with one another, they are bound to be influenced by one another. It cannot be contended that India was altogether impervious to the influence of the West. Likewise, it is ridiculous to maintain that "Indian civilisation was a bye-product of the Macedonian or Achaemenian invasion."

As regards the *influence of India on the West*, it cannot be denied that India exported large quantities of spices, fine fabrics, precious gems and aromatic articles to the countries of the Western world. Indian elephants were also in great demand for use in wars. However, India exercised greater influence in the field of literature, science, philosophy and religion.

It is pointed out that Greek physicians had a knowledge of Indian medical science. According to a Parsi tradition, the Sassanid king Shapur (242—272 A.D.) "caused to be included among the holy books, secular works on medicine, astronomy and metaphysics, found in India, Greek and other countries". King Shapur had an Indian medical man residing in Susa. The latter was responsible not only for treating the patients but also for the teaching of medical science to students. It is stated that after his death, his pupils gave Iran a large number of professionals in medical science.

Indian philosophy also exercised a lot of influence on Greek philosophy. Clement of Alexandria went to the extent of saying that the Greeks "*stole their philosophy from barbarians*". Sir William Jones pointed out the resemblance between Sankhya philosophy and the Pythagorean philosophy. Many scholars are of the opinion that the latter was derived from the former. It is pointed out that such a view is not tenable as there was practically no intercourse between India and Greece at that time. However, it is



maintained that the establishment of the Achaemenian Empire touching the borders of India and Greece, made Persia a centre for such contacts. Even before Alexander, there were cultural contacts between India and Greece. Rawlinson has referred to an interview between Socrates and an Indian philosopher. It is pointed out that even in the 5th century B.C., Indian philosophers travelled in the West. It is possible that either in Greece or in Persia, if not in India, Pythagoras might have come into contact with Indians and got his main philosophical ideas from them. Schroeder is of the opinion that India was the birth-place of the ideas of Pythagoras. Similar views are held by Colebrooke and Garbe. Lassen denies Indian influence on Greek philosophy before the Christian era. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire has traced the ideas of Sankhya philosophy in Plato. Prof. Weber has traced the influence of the Indian conception of Vach on the ideas of Logos.

It is contended that the mystical philosophy of Orphic borrowed a lot from Indian beliefs. The Greeks borrowed from the Indians their belief in reincarnation and the doctrine of Karma. They also got from India the doctrine of Yoga or meditation and ideas of asceticism. It is contended that the Neo-Platonic school of Alexandria and Gnosticism show traces of Hindu influence. Many of these philosophers must have come to the East to get their knowledge and philosophy.

Buddhism spread in Western countries in the time of Asoka. The existence of Buddhism on the Persian borderland is proved by the ruins of a Buddhist monastery in Seistan. The Chinese writers tell us that Buddhism had a stronghold in Parthia. A Parthian prince abdicated the throne and became a Buddhist monk in the second century A.D. Alberuni tells us that in former times, Khorasan, Persia, Iraq, Mosul and the country up to the frontier of Syria were Buddhistic. There are many traces of Buddhist influence on the Manichæan religion which was preached in the third century A.D. A book written in the form of a Buddhist Sutra speaks of its founder Mani as the Tathagata and mentions the Buddha and the Boddhisattva.

There is evidence to show that Brahmanical religion prevailed in Western Asia. Zenob tells us that there was an Indian colony on the upper Euphrates in the second century B.C. The Indians built there two temples containing images of gods. It is stated that when Gregory tried to destroy those temples in about 304 A.D. he was opposed by the Indians. When Christianity made its appearance in those regions, Indian culture and religion were already important there. It is pointed out that "the Crozier, the Mitre, the Chasuble, the Cardinals, robe, the double choir at the Divine Office, the chants, the exorcism, the censer with five chains, the blessing imparted by extending right hand over the heads of the faithful, the rosary, the celibacy of the clergy, their separation from the world, the worship of saints, the fasts, processions, the litamies and holy water of Christianity are the results of the contact with the Indian Buddhists".

Some Indian books like the Panchtantra were very popular in Western countries and were translated in many languages. Many Indian legends found their way to Europe.

However, all this does not mean that India was not influenced by the Western countries. The Greeks had profound influence on the knowledge of astronomy in this country. All the later works on Indian astronomy freely quote the authority of Greek astronomers. The latter were described as *Yovanesvara* or *Yavanacharya*. The Gargi Samhita says: "The Yavanas are barbarians. Yet the science of astronomy originated with them and for this reason they must be revered like gods". The names of Greek planets and certain technical terms of astronomy were frequently used by Indian astronomers in their works. The Indians borrowed from the Greeks the system of making horoscopes.

The Greeks also influenced the method of making coins in India. Before their contact with the Greeks, the Indians used punch-marked or rudely struck coins. They used one die on the coins and their coins were also unpolished. The Indians learnt from the Greeks to strike coins from double dies. In other words, they learnt to print on both sides of their coins. On one side of the coins was printed the name of the king along with his title and on the other was given an animal or some other symbol.

The Greeks also influenced Indian sculpture. Before the Greeks, Bharhut and Sanchi were the centres of art. Greek sculpture appealed to the imagination of the Indians and the same was adopted by them. The Gandhara School of art is a clear example of the influence of the West on Indian art. The physical features, drapery or manner of dress were borrowed from the Greeks.

Weber and Windisch traced Greek influence on the form of the Sanskrit literary drama and Dr. V.A. Smith also holds the same view. It is pointed out that the Indians borrowed from the Greek drama the ideas of the screen, the parasite and the clown.

It is contended by some writers that the Indians borrowed from the Greeks the decimal system of notation in Mathematics. However, it is pointed out that the decimal system was planned by an Indian long before the Greeks came to India.

In the field of religion, the worship of images by the Buddhists and later on by the Hindus is attributed to Greek influence.

It is pointed out that the contact of Greece with India "revolutionized her coinage, enriched her astronomy and improved her art". According to Prof. Sathianathaiar, "The fact of the matter is that, like the Greeks, the Hindus were not averse to borrowing from peoples who had something really good to give, and when they borrowed discriminately they assimilated the foreign element in an admirable manner, so much so that in some cases the proof of indebtedness is difficult to elucidate."

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## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE NAGAS

The Nagas were serpent-worshipping non-Aryan tribes of ancient India. The worship of serpents was popular in all parts of the country. We have epigraphic, numismatic and literary evidence to show that there were Naga people in different parts of the country. Many localities were named after the Nagas, e.g., Nagapura, Urugapura, Nagarakhanda, etc. However, at present we are concerned only with the Naga dynasties that became powerful in the time of the later Kushanas and were ultimately suppressed by the Gupta rulers.

The evidence of the Puranas is that Naga rulers flourished at Vidisa, Kantipuri, Mathura and Padmavati. The Puranas divide the Naga dynasty of Vidisa into two parts. To the first part belonged those kings who flourished before the end of the Sungas and to the second part belonged those kings who flourished after their end. The Kings before 31 B.C. in the Naga dynasty were Sessa, Bhogin, Ramachandra, Nakhavan, Dhana Varman or Dharmavarman and Vangara. The names of the post-Sunga Nagas were Bhuta-Nandi or Bhutanandi, Sisunandi and Yasonandi. It appears that from the time of Bhutanandi when the dynasty was re-established, they made Padmavati as their capital. A Sivalingam called Svarnabindu was established there.

After a lot of discussion, Dr. K.P. Jayaswal gave the following chronology of the Nagas of Vidisa :—

1. Sessa Naga (110—90 B.C.).
2. Bhogin (90—80 B.C.).
3. Ramachandra (80—50 B.C.).
4. Dharma-Varman (50—40 B.C.).
5. Vangara (40—31 B.C.).
6. Bhutanandi (c. 20 B.C.—10 B.C.).
7. Sisu Nandi (10 B.C.—25 A.D.).
8. Yasah Nandi (c. 25 A.D.—30 A.D.).
9. Purushadata.
10. Uttamadata.
11. Kamadata.
12. Bhavadata.
13. Siva Nandi or Sivadata.



Dr. K. P. Jayaswal points out that the five last kings are known only from inscriptions and coins. Their order of succession is also uncertain. All the 13 Naga rulers covered a period of about 200 years from about 100 B.C. to 78 A.D.

*Nava Naga.* According to K. P. Jayaswal, Nava Naga was the founder of the Nava Naga dynasty whose official title was Bharasivas. He was a contemporary of Vasudeva, the Kushana ruler and he ruled from about 140 A.D. to 170 A.D. He ruled in Uttar Pradesh. His coins were issued from Kausambi. By his coinage he was connected with Padmavati and Vidisa on the one hand and with Virasena and the kings of the Kausambi coins on the other.

*Virasena.* In about 175 or 180 A.D., we find a Naga king named Virasena re-establishing Hindu sovereignty at Mathura. According to Dr. Jayaswal, the rise of Virasena was a turning point not only in the Naga history but also in the history of Aryavarta. His coins have been found in Northern India, almost all over Uttar Pradesh and in the Punjab. They are most common at Mathura. He occupied Mathura and ruled all over the Aryavarta Doab. An inscription of Virasena was discovered by Sir Richard Burn. There are a number of broken sculptures and carved pieces and the inscription is on the head and mouth of a sculptured animal. The inscription is dated in the 13th year of the reign of Svamin Virasena. Virasena assumed full sovereignty from the first year of his reign. It appears that he ousted the Kushanas from Mathura and the whole of the Doab between the Ganga and the Yamuna. Virasena had a fairly long reign and according to Dr. Jayaswal he ruled from about 170 A.D. to 210 A.D. The same writer is of the opinion that "The intimate connection between his coins and the coins of the undoubted Bharasiva king, the Naga emblem on his coins as if to complete his name, the period of his rise and his establishing himself at Mathura mark Virasena out as one of the earliest Bharasiva Nagas of the inscriptions and the Nava Nagas of the Puranas."

*Bhava Naga.* According to Dr. Jayaswal, there were four kings after Virasena. Haya Naga ruled for 30 years from about 210 to 245 A.D. Traya Naga ruled from about 245 to 250 A.D. Barhina Naga ruled for 7 years from about 250 to 260 A.D. Charaja Naga ruled for 30 years or more from about 260 to 290 A.D. Bhava Naga ruled from about 290 to 315 A.D. Dr. Jayaswal made it clear that he had fixed the date of Bhava Naga on a consideration of the Vakataka and Gupta chronology. Bhava Naga was a contemporary of Pravarsena I who was an elder contemporary of Samudra Gupta. Bhava Naga is described as belonging to the family of the Bharasivas "whose royal line owed its origin to the great satisfaction of Siva that was caused by their carrying a Siva linga placed as a load upon their shoulder" and "who were besprinkled on the forehead with the pure water of the Bhagirathi that had been obtained by their valour." According to Dr. Jayaswal, the Bharasivas re-issuing from the jungles of Hoshangabad and Jubalpur, seem to have reached the Ganges

through Baghelkhand. They are credited with the performance of no less than 10 Asvamedha sacrifices.

The real contribution of the Bharasivas, according to Dr. Javiaswal, is the foundation of a new tradition, the tradition of Hindu freedom and sovereignty. The Manava Dharma Sastra has laid down that Aryavarta was the land of the Aryas and the Mlechhas must live beyond that and outside. This was their political and international birth-right. It had to be vindicated. "The tradition initiated by the Bharasivas was kept up by the Vakatakas and was taken over by the Guptas and fully maintained by the subsequent emperors from Chandra Gupta Vikramaditya to Baladitya. If there had been no Bharasivas there would not have come into existence a Gupta Empire and the Gupta Vikramadityas." Again, "The Bharasivas re-established Hindu sovereignty in Aryavarta. They restored the Hindu imperial throne and the national civilization and gave a new life to their country. They revived asvamedha after a lapse of some four centuries. They restored the sanctity of the Mother Ganges, the river of Lord Siva throughout its length by freeing her from sin and crime, and made her worthy to be sculptured at the doors of the temples of the Vakatakas and the Guptas as a symbol of purity. They did all this, and left no memorial to themselves. They left their deeds and obliterated themselves."

Samudragupta claims to have extirpated a large number of kings of Aryavarta about the middle of the fourth century A.D. and two of them were Naga rulers, viz. Ganapati Naga and Nagasena. However, it appears that the Gupta kings maintained friendly relations with the suppressed Naga houses. This is proved by the marriage of Chandragupta II with Kubera-Naga princess, who was Mahadevi and mother of Purushavarma Gupta. A Naga chief named Sarvanaga was appointed Vishayapati or Provincial Governor. He ruled the Antarvedi District between the Ganga and the Yamuna and between Prayaga and Hardwar under Skandagupta in 466 A.D. While it is not possible to say to which particular family Kubera-Naga and Sarvanaga belonged, it is certain that Ganapati Naga and Nagasena belonged to the house of Padmavati.

We have come across some coins of Maharaja Ganendra or Ganapa at Padmavati, Vidisa and Mathura. This king of Padmavati has been identified with king Ganapati Naga who was defeated by Samudragupta. We have not come across any coin of Nagasena so far. However, it is stated in Bana's Harshacharita that confidential deliberations of Nagasena were divulged by a Sarika bird and that led to his destruction at Padmavati. It is possible that after the overthrow of Ganapati Naga, Samudragupta placed Nagasena on the throne of Padmavati as his vassal. It is also possible that the latter might have revolted and completely crushed.

The Puranas refer to nine Naga kings of Padmavati. Three of them might have been Bhava Naga, Ganapati Naga and Nagasena. We find references to some other Naga rulers in the coins discovered in the neighbourhood of Padmavati. Their names

are Maharaja Bhimanaga, Maharaja Skandanaga, Maharaja Brihaspatinaga and Maharaja Devanaga. A few coins from Padmavati are attributed to Vibhunaga. Some coins with the legend Vyaghra are assigned to a king named Vyaghranaga.

The Puranas tell us that seven Naga kings ruled at Mathura after the Kushanas. We have coins of Gomitra, Brahmamitra, Dridhamitra, Suryamitra and Vishnumitra issued from Mathura. Those coins belong to the first century B.C. There are other coins which bear the names of Purushadatta, Uttamadatta, Ramadatta, Raja Kamadatta, Raja Seshadatta, Raja Bhavadatta and Raja Balabhuti. Those rulers might have been the vassals of the Kushanas.

Dr. Jayaswal tells us that the Naga Government was a federation consisting of three main monarchical Naga families and a number of republics. Two branches at Padmavati and Mathura were set up by the Bharasivas with distinguishing dynastic titles of their own. There was a ruling dynasty at or near Indrapura in the Bulandshahr District. Nagadatta, Nagasena or Matila or their ancestors did not strike any coin. The same was not done by any governor of Ahichhatra in the time of the Bharasivas. So far as the Bharasiva government was concerned, we find only two sovereign centres, viz., Kantipuri and Padmavati. The seat at Champavati (Bhagalpur) was a subordinate seat. The republics in Malwa and Rajputana and probably also the Kunindas in the Punjab who struck their respective coins in the Bharasiva times, were also sovereign members of the Bharasiva federation.

Dr. Jayaswal points out that before Samudragupta, the greater portion of the Punjab had been liberated. The Madrakas were striking their own coins and negotiated peace with and accepted the suzerainty of Samudragupta. The hills up to Kangra were once more under Hindu rulers when Samudragupta appeared on the scene. Most of this achievement was to be credited to the Bharasiva Nagas. The Nagas were responsible for driving out the Kushanas from India. That was not an easy task.

The rule of the Nagas was marked with the asceticism of Siva. There was no grandeur about it. The Nagas ignored the imperial coinage of the Kushanas and reverted to the old Hindu coinage. They assumed no grandeur. They gave freedom to the Hindu republics. They gave them freedom to mint their own coins and live their own full lives.

The performance of Asvamedhas was symbolic of a political revival and a revival of orthodox culture.

Dr. Jayaswal concludes thus: "The foundations of modern Hinduism were laid by the Naga emperors and that edifice was reared by the Vakatakas and elaborated by the Guptas."

### *Suggested Readings*

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## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE GUPTA EMPIRE

1. *Sources.* There are many sources for writing the history of the Guptas. Among the literary sources, the Puranas occupy a very important place. A critical examination of the dynastic lists as given in the Puranas by scholars like Pargiter, Jayaswal and others has brought them to the definite conclusion that the accounts of the Puranas regarding the political history of the Guptas are trustworthy. The Puranas are 18 in number and they give us a clear picture of the Gupta Empire, its various provinces and their boundaries. The Puranas help us in locating the names of the kings and minor dynasties. They also give us a full account of the contemporaries of Samudragupta. The Dharmasutras also give us a lot of useful information about this period. The Kamandak Nitisara was probably written in the time of Chandragupta II by his prime minister named Sikhara. The Kavya Natak literature is also useful for our purpose. To this category belong the Setukavya, Kaumudi Mahotsava, Devichandragupiam and Mudrarakshas. The Devichandragupiam is attributed to Vishakdutt who is also considered to be the author of Mudrarakshas. The story of Ramagupta is given in this drama. The main story of Mudrarakshas is concerned with the establishment of the Mauryan dynasty by Chandragupta Maurya and Kautilya. However, the drama is full of diplomacy and politics. It throws sidelights on the religion of the kings and the religious condition of the people in the Gupta period. Vishnu was worshipped in the form of Boar incarnation. The names of the people and tribes in the time of Chandragupta II are given in the drama. The account of India left by Fahien is also very useful for our purpose. Some information is to be found in the account left by Itsing, the Chinese traveller, who came to India after the death of Harsha.

(2) A lot of information is to be found in the inscriptions of the Gupta period. The most important inscription is the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta. It is on a Pillar of Asoka. There is no date on this inscription, but it must have been inscribed before the performance of the Asvamedha sacrifice by Samudragupta. The author of this inscription was Harisena, the poet-laureate of Samudragupta. A lot of praise is given to Samudragupta in this inscription. The campaigns of Samudragupta are given in detail in this inscription. The names of the various rulers who were subdued by Samudragupta are also given in this inscription. A lot of space is devoted to the qualities of head and heart of Samudragupta.

In addition to the Allahabad Pillar Inscription, there are many more inscriptions of this period. Reference may be made in



this connection to the Bhitari Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta, the Udayagiri Cave Inscription, the Mathura Stone Inscription, the Sanchi Stone Inscription, the Gadghwa Stone Inscription, the Mehrauli Iron Pillar Inscription of King Chandra, etc.

(3) A large number of seals have been found from various places. The variety and character of seals give us an insight into the provincial and local administration. The seals are of both high and low officials.

(4) The monuments of the Gupta period are also a source of the history of that period. Those monuments illustrate the different centres of art and architecture of the Gupta period.

(5) A lot of useful information for the history of the Guptas is to be found in the coins of the Gupta Emperors. A reference may be made in this connection to Catalogue of Coins of the Gupta Dynasties by Allan. The various Gupta kings issued various kinds of coins with various inscriptions and they help us in understanding the personal religion of the various kings and also their hobbies, etc.

#### *Condition of Northern India before Rise of the Guptas :*

**Monarchies.** During the period between the fall of the Kushanas and the rise of the Guptas, there were a number of monarchical and republican states in Northern India. The important monarchical states were the kingdoms of the Nagas, kingdom of Ahichhatra, Ayodhya, Kausambi, kingdoms of the Vakatakas and Maukharis and the Guptas.

(1) *The Nagas* had spread themselves in different parts of India. This fact is proved by the literary, epigraphic and numismatic evidence. According to the Puranas, Vidisa, Kantipuri, Mathura and Padmavati were the seats of Naga power. The names of some of the Naga rulers of Vidisa were Sisha, Bhogin and Sadachandra Chandrasa. We learn from inscriptions that Maharaja Bhavanaga was the maternal grandfather of Rudrasena I whose grandson was a contemporary of Chandragupta II. He belonged to the family of the Bharasivas who came into prominence after the fall of the Kushana empire. We have come across some coins at Padmavati bearing the name of Bhavanaga. The Allahabad Pillar Inscription tells us that Samudragupta uprooted two Naga rulers, viz., Ganapatinaga and Nagasena. However, Samudragupta married his son Chandragupta II with a Naga princess, viz., Kuveranaga. It is suggested that Maharaj Ganendra or Ganapa whose coins have been found at Padmavati, Mathura and Vidisa was probably the same as Ganapatinaga mentioned in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription. In the Puranas, there is a reference to 9 rulers of Padmavati. The names of some of those rulers were Bhimnaga, Skandanaga, Brihaspatinaga, Devnaga, Vibhanaga, and Vyaghranaga. It is possible that Maharaja Virseni whose capital was at Mathura and who was a powerful King of the times, was also a Naga. His coins have been found at Mathura, Bulandshahr and even in the Punjab.

(2) Coins refer to the rulers of the kingdom of Abhithira during the first three centuries of the Christian era. Their names were Bhadrachosha, Suryamitra, Phalgunamitra, Agnamitra, Bhadrastamitra, etc. The name of Achyuta is also found on some coins and he was probably the same ruler who was defeated by Samudragupta.

(3) The names of Dhandeva and Visakhadeva, rulers of Ayodhya, are known from coins. Dhandeva was probably the ruler of Kosala who has been described as a descendant of Pushyamitra. Satyamitra, Ayumitra, Sanghamitra were also the rulers of Ayodhya.

(4) The names of Sudeva, Brihatsvamitra, Asvaghosha, Agnamitra, Devamitra, Varunamitra, Jyeshthamitra, and Prajapati-mitra are mentioned in the coins as the rulers of Kausambi.

(5) The founder of the Vakataka dynasty was Vindhvasakti. He has been described as Vakataka-vamsaketu. He increased his power by fighting many battles. He has been compared with India and Vishnu. He was succeeded by his son, Pravarsena I who was the real founder of the dynasty. He extended his territory up to the Narbada. He is credited with the performance of all the seven sacrifices. He performed as many as four horse sacrifices. He took up the title of Samrat. He entered into matrimonial alliances with the Bharsivas. Pravarsena I was succeeded by Rudrasena I. The latter was a contemporary of Samudragupta and was probably the same person as Rudradeva whose name has been described in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription.

(6) The Maukharis ruled in Avadh under Sundervarman. The Maukhari Senapatis constructed sacrificial pillars.

(7) The Guptas also were a local power. With the passage of time, they were able to subdue all others and succeeded in establishing their hegemony. Probably Srigupta was the founder of the Gupta dynasty. He was succeeded by Maharaj Ghatotkacha. The latter was succeeded by Chandragupta I with whom the real glory of the Guptas started.

**Republics.** The names of the republican states were the Arjunayanas, Malavas, Yaudheyas, Sibis, Kunindas, Kulutas and Audumbaras.

(1) The Arjunayans ruled in the region formerly comprised in the states of Bharatpur and Alwar, now in Rajasthan. We have come across a large number of their coins which bear the legend of Arjunayanam Jayah. They came into prominence after the Indo-Greeks but they were subdued by the Sakas. They asserted themselves once again after the fall of the Kushanas but were ultimately subdued by the Guptas.

(2) The Malavas were the contemporaries of Alexander. At that time they were in the Punjab. However, later on, they migrated to modern Rajasthan. The name of their capital in Rajasthan was Malvanagar near Jaipur. They were the first to

use the Vikrama era. However, they also used the Krita era. It appears that they were successful against the Sakas. There is a reference to Maukharī Mahasenapati Bal as the vassal of the Malava republic. However, the Malavas were subdued by the Guptas. The Malava coins bear the legend Malavana Jayah.

(3) It appears that the Yaudheyas had been successful in establishing their authority in East Punjab, parts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. They are described as Ayudhajivi Kshatriyas by Panini, the great Sanskrit Grammarian. The deity of the Yaudheyas was Brahmanyadeva. They were subdued by the Sakas and the Kushanas. However, after the fall of the Kushanas, they came into prominence but were ultimately subdued by the Guptas. Their coins bear the legends of Bahudhan ka Yodheyānam, Bhagvatah Svamino Brahmadevasya Kumarasya Yaudheyānam and Yaudheyaganasya Jayah. There were many sections of the Yaudheyas. The Yaudheyas were so strong that they were able to challenge the authority of Rudradamana.

(4) The Lichchhavis were another powerful republic at that time. That republic existed even in the time of the Buddha and its position before the emergence of the Guptas was so strong that a matrimonial alliance with a Lichchhavi princess brought strength and prestige to Chandragupta I.

(5) There is a reference to the republic of the Sibis in the time of Alexander. We are told that they had a huge infantry. Later on, they migrated to what is now Rajasthan. They settled nearabout Chittor and set up their capital at Madhayamika. Some of their coins bear the legend Majhamikaya Sibijanapadasa.

(6) We have come across a large number of the coins of the Republic of Kunindas. Those coins bear the legend Bhagvatahs Chatresvara Mahatmanah. Chhatra was probably the name of the capital of the Republic of the Kunindas. The territory of the Kunindas covered the region between the Yamuna and the Sutlej and the upper courses of the Bias and the Sutlej. There is a reference to Amoghabhuti as a ruler of the Kunindas.

(7) The Kunindas were overthrown by Kulutas. The latter inhabited the Kabul Valley. Their coins refer to the names of King Virayasas and Bhadrayasas. The Kulutas were subdued by the Guptas.

(8) We have a large number of coins of Audumbaras. Those coins bear the legend of Bhagvato Mahadevasya Rajarajasya. The name of some of the Audumbara rulers were Dharaghosha, Sivadas and Rudradasa. Some of the coins have the figure of a Siva temple with a Dhvaja, a trident and a battle axe. It is also presumed that the rulers like Agnimitra, Mahimitra, Bhumitra, Mahabhumitra, whose names are mentioned on the coins, also belonged to the Audumbaras.

*Origin and Foundation of Gupta Dynasty.* The origin of the Imperial Gupta dynasty is obscure. The name Gupta occurs in ancient Indian records, particularly of the Sunga and Satavahana

periods, but it is not possible to connect them with the Imperial Gupta dynasty of the 4th century A.D. The view of Jayaswal was that the Guptas were Jats but that view is not accepted at present. The Puranas tell us that the original Gupta territory comprised Magadha and regions along the river Ganges extending up to north-west Bengal. However, there are certain writers who hold the opinion that Magadha was not the original home of the Guptas. It is also argued that Magadha might have been acquired by Maharaja Ghatotkacha but there is nothing to support this view.

*Sri Gupta* (c. 240-280 A.D.). Sri Gupta was the founder of the Gupta Dynasty. His Kingdom must have comprised a portion of Bengal. The title taken up by him was Maharaja and not Maharajadhiraja.

*Ghatotkacha*. Ghatotkacha has been described in the Gupta records as the son and successor of Sri Gupta. However, at some places he is also described as the first Gupta king. This view seems to be incorrect. Like Srigupta, Ghatotkacha was also known as Maharaja.

*Chandragupta I* (319-335 A.D.). Ghatotkacha was succeeded by his son, Chandragupta I. He is described as Maharajadhiraja or king of kings. The new title must have been acquired by him as a result of his conquests. However, we do not possess any details regarding those conquests. The Puranas refer to the Gupta Empire in the time of Chandragupta I in these words: "Kings born of the Gupta family will enjoy all these territories, viz., Prayaga on the Ganges, Saketa and Magadha". We have no details regarding the conquests of Prayaga or Saketa. Vaisali does not seem to have been a part of the kingdom of Chandragupta I. However, in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, Nepal is mentioned as a state on the frontiers of his dominions. It is suggested that Chandragupta I "simply drove out the Scythians and gave independence to the province of Magadha after three centuries of subjection and foreign oppression." However, we have no evidence in support of this suggestion.

The coins of Chandragupta I associate the Lichchavis with his sovereignty as a result of his marriage with Kumar Devi, the Lichchavi princess. A lot of importance is attached to this marriage. It is pointed out that before the marriage of Chandragupta to Kumar Devi he was merely a ruler at or near Pataliputra. However, as a result of this marriage, the Gupta Dynasty rose into prominence. The view of Dr. Smith is that Kumar Devi brought to her husband a valuable influence which in the course of a few years secured to him a prominent position in Magadha and in the neighbouring countries. It appears that at the time of this marriage, the Lichchavis were masters or overlords of Pataliputra, and Samudragupta, by means of his matrimonial alliance, succeeded to the power previously held by the relatives of his wife. Chandragupta was raised by his Lichchavis connection from the rank of a local chief to such dignity that he felt justified in assuming the title of Maharajadhiraja. He struck coins in the joint names of himself, his



queen and the Lichchhavis. His son and successor habitually described himself with pride as the son of the daughter of Lichchhavis. However, this view of Dr. Smith is not accepted by Allan and R.C. Majumdar. The view of Allan is that the pride of the Guptas in their Lichchhavis blood was rather due to the ancient lineage of the Lichchhavis than to any material advantage gained by this alliance. The view of Dr. Majumdar is that the advantage gained by Chandragupta I was a political one and not a social one.

*Gupta Era.* It was Dr. Fleet who put forward the thesis in 1887 that Chandragupta I was the founder of the Gupta era which began in 319-20 A.D. This has been done to give certainty to the chronology of the Gupta period.

*Samudragupta* (c. 335-375 A.D.). It is clearly stated in the Allahabad Pillar inscription that Samudragupta was selected for the throne by his father as he was considered to be worthy and this decision was publicly declared in open assembly before the Counsellors by asking the prince : "Protect ye this earth." It is also stated that when this declaration was made, his kinsmen of equal birth became pale-faced with disappointment, but the members of the Council were overjoyed.

The exact date of accession to throne of Samudragupta is not known. If we accept the evidence of the Nalanda Plate, Samudragupta must have ascended the throne about the year 325 A.D. Some writers regard him as the founder of Gupta Era which means that he ascended to throne in 320 A.D. According to Dr. R.C. Majumdar, the accession of Samudragupta may be placed between 340 A.D. and 350 A.D. According to Dr. R.K. Mookerji, Samudragupta ruled from about 335 to 380 A.D.

*His Conquests.* Samudragupta is famous for his conquests and that is why he has been given the title of the Indian Napoleon by Dr. V.A. Smith. His conquests were in many directions and of various kinds. It is pointed out that so far as Aryavrata was concerned, he acted as a Digvijayi, but so far as Dakshinapath or the Deccan was concerned he acted as Dharmvijayi.

As regards his conquests in the south, Samudragupta captured and liberated a number of kings of the Dakshinapath. Their names were Mahendra of Kosala, Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara, Mahendra of Pistapura, Svamidatta of Kottura, Mantaraja of Korala, Hastivarman of Vengi, Vishnu Gopa of Kanchi, Ugrasena of Palakka, Daman of Erandapala, Nilaraja of Avaumkta, Kavura of Devrashtra, Dhananjaya of Kushthlapura and other kings. A lot of ingenuity has been shown by various scholars in identifying the various places mentioned above, and it is not possible to refer to that controversy. However, it is clear that all these places were in the south and their rulers were defeated by Samudragupta.

As regards his conquests in the north, Samudragupta "violently exterminated the following kings of Aryavarta who were his neighbours : Rudradeva, Mitta, Nagadata, Chandravarumana, Gana-

patinaga, Nagasena, Achyuatia, Nandan, Balvarman and many other kings. These kings have been identified by the various scholars.

Samudragupta reduced to the condition of serfdom the rulers of the Atavika kingdoms or forest countries. These Atavika Rajyas included Ghazipur and the forest kingdoms connected with the Jubbulpore territory.

The frontier states both in the east and the west submitted to Samudragupta "by giving all kinds of taxes, obeying his orders and tendering homage." The states in the east were the kingdoms of Samatata, Kamrupa, Davaka, Kartaripur and Nepal. The states in the west were not kingdoms but republics of peoples called the Malavas, Arjunayanas, Yaudheyas, Madrikas, Abhiras, Prarjunas, Sanakanikas, Kakas, Kharaparikas and others.

Dr. Altekar points out that it is not correct to say that the republics mentioned in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta came to an end after their conquest by Samudragupta. All that happened to them was that those republics accepted his overlordship and paid him tribute. This does not mean that they lost their autonomy and ceased to exist. They continued their semi-independent existence till the time of the Hun invasion.

It is to be observed that the conquests of Samudragupta were of different degrees. There were kings who were killed and whose dominions were annexed. There were also kings who were defeated, taken prisoners, and then liberated and re-instated as his vassals. There were also frontier states, kingdoms and republics which anticipated his conquest by offering submission and personal homage to Samudragupta beforehand. Samudragupta was not a ruthless annexationist. He was a magnanimous conqueror who was generous to the fallen foe. It has rightly been stated that "his fame which pervades the whole world, is due to his re-establishing many royal families whom he had overthrown and deprived of their sovereignty."

The Allahabad Pillar Inscription refers to independent foreign countries which entered into relationship with Samudragupta and their names are the Daivaputras, Shahis, Shahanushahis, Sakas and Murundas. Various interpretations have been put on these terms by various scholars.

Srimeghavarman, the Buddhist king of Ceylon, was a contemporary of Samudragupta. He sent two monks, one of whom was his brother, to pay homage to the diamond throne and also to see Asoka's monastery to the east of the Sacred Tree at Bodhgaya. We are told that the two monks were not treated hospitably and on their return they complained to their king that they could not find any place in India where they could stay in comfort. The King of Ceylon decided to build a monastery for his subjects in India. For that purpose he sent a formal embassy to Samudragupta laden with gems and other precious articles. A request was also made to Samudragupta for permission to build a monastery in India, and the necessary permission was given. Subsequently, the king of Ceylon built a monastery of three storeys, six halls and three towers. A statue of

Buddha made of gold and silver was set up in the monastery. The monastery was called by Hiuen Tsang as Mahabodhi Sangharama.

*Extent of his Empire.* According to Dr. R.C. Majumdar, the empire of Samudragupta "comprised nearly the whole of northern India, with the exception of Kashmir, Western Punjab, Western Rajputana, Sindh and Gujarat with the highlands of Chhatisgarh and Orissa and a long stretch of territory along the eastern coast extending as far south as Chingleput and probably even further. The view of Dr. R.K. Mookerji is that Samudragupta was the master of a wide empire extending in the east to the Brahmaputra, in the south to the Narmada and in the north to the Himalayas and Kashmir.

*Horse Sacrifice.* After the completion of his conquests, Samudragupta performed the Asvamedh sacrifice. We have come across gold coins which seem to have been struck on that occasion and which were distributed among the Brahmans as gifts. Those coins show a figure of the horse to be sacrificed before an altar, and the legend "The Maharajadhiraja of irresistible valour having conquered the earth now wins heaven." It is contended that Samudragupta was responsible for reviving the institution of Asvamedh sacrifice which had fallen into abeyance for a long time after Pushyamitra of the Sunga Empire. However, this is not correct. Horse sacrifices were performed by many other kings even during this interval. This was particularly true of the Naga kings of the house of the Bharsivas.

*Coins.* The coins of Samudragupta give us a lot of useful information about him. It was Samudragupta who inaugurated and Indianised the Gupta coinage. There are as many as eight different types of coins of Samudragupta and all of them are made of gold. The various types are known as standard type, archer type, tiger type, Asvamedh type, battle-axe type, etc.

*Personal accomplishment of Samudragupta.* Samudragupta was not only a great conqueror but he had many other qualities of head and heart. He is described as a Kaviraj and composer of a large amount of poetry. It is stated that Samudragupta put to shame the preceptor of the Lord of gods and Tumburu and Narad and others by his sharp and polished intellect and choral skill and musical accomplishments. He was the prince of poets. He is shown on his coins as playing on a lute. He was well-versed in the Shastras. He was not only a learned man himself but was also fond of the company of learned men. He was very kind towards his people. He was ready to forgive those who submitted before him. He restored the wealth of those rulers whom he had conquered. He was the very incarnation of kindness to the poor, the helpless and the afflicted. He is described as "the giver of many hundreds of thousands of cows". He is described as the exterminator of all kings, without a rival in the world and whose fame was known as far as the four oceans. He is described as the giver of Kotis of gold pieces.

*Estimate.* The view of Dr. R.C. Majumdar is that Samudragupta was a striking almost a unique personality. He ushered



in a new age in the history of India. He was inspired by the vision of an all-India empire. He established an imperial authority strong enough to ensure the internal peace of India by checking the disruptive tendencies of minor states. He did not bring all the outlying kingdoms under his direct control, but tried to win them over by his policy of conciliation. While he gave them internal autonomy, he did not give them liberty to create trouble. He was brilliant both as a general and as a statesman. Dr V.A. Smith's description of Samudragupta as the Indian Napoleon is most appropriate. The view of Dr. R. K. Mookerji is that while Asoka stands for peace and non-violence, Samudragupta stands for war and aggression. The one had a contempt for conquests and the other had a passion for them. He was fired by the ideal of a Chakravarti king. "A hero of a hundred fights, he was able to make all parts of India acknowledge his paramount sovereignty by a victorious march through them".

*Rama Gupta.* For a long time, it was unanimously held on the basis of epigraphic records that Samudragupta was succeeded by Chandragupta II. However, certain new material has been found on whose basis it has been contended that Samudragupta was not succeeded by Chandragupta II but by Rama Gupta. The *Natyadarpan* of Ramachandra Gunachandra says that Rama Gupta was the son and successor of Samudragupta. He married Dhruvadevi or Dhruvaswamini, who, later on, married Chandragupta II and became the mother of Kumar Gupta I. There are also certain extracts from historical drama known as *Devichandraguptam* where it is stated that Rama Gupta sustained a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Sakas. In order to secure the safety of his people, he agreed to surrender his queen to the Saka King. There was a long dialogue between Rama Gupta and his queen Dhruvadevi. Rama Gupta maintained that he was doing so for the sake of his subjects. The queen resented the action of her husband and complained of his heartlessness and cowardice. Rama Gupta's younger brother, Chandra Gupta, protested against this act of dishonour and offered himself to go to the camp of the enemy in the disguise of queen Dhruvadevi in order to kill the Saka King. Chandragupta actually disguised himself as a woman and killed the Saka King in his camp. By doing so, he not only saved the empire but also honour of the queen and dynasty. This incident raised Chandragupta in the eyes of Dhruvadevi and the people. The conduct of Rama Gupta was condemned. There was estrangement between Rama Gupta and Chandragupta. The latter pretended madness, and ultimately, succeeded in killing Rama Gupta. He not only placed himself on the throne but also married the widow of his brother.

There is a lot of controversy amongst scholars like Dr. Altekar, Dr. Raychaudhuri and Dr. J. N. Banerji with regard to the position of Rama Gupta. However, the story of Rama Gupta cannot be dismissed on the ground that it is merely a creation of imagination.

*Chandragupta II (375 to 414 A.D.).* Chandragupta II was one of the greatest kings of India. He was the worthy son of a worthy



father, and he completed what had been started by his father and grandfather. He has been identified with King Chandra mentioned in the Mehrauli Iron Pillar Inscription.

Chandragupta II strengthened his position by matrimonial alliances. He himself married Kuvernaga of the Naga family and had a daughter from her named Prabhavati Gupta. The latter was married to Rudrasena II, the Vakataka king. According to Dr. V.A. Smith, the Vakataka Maharaja occupied a geographical position in which he could be of much service or disservice to the northern invader of the dominions of the Saka satraps of Gujarat and Saurashtra. Chandragupta adopted a prudent precaution in giving his daughter to the Vakataka prince and so secured his subordinate allegiance. Rudrasena II had a very short reign and after his death Prabhavati Gupta was appointed the Regent of her minor sons and that led to the increase of the Gupta influence at the Vakataka Court. As Prabhavati Gupta was the *de facto* ruler of the Vakataka kingdom from about 390 to 410 A.D., Chandragupta II took advantage of this opportunity to defeat and annex the territory of Western Satraps. In one inscription it is stated that daughters of the ruler of Kuntala were married to the Gupta rulers.

The greatest military achievement of Chandragupta II was his advance to the Arabian Sea and his subjugation of the Peninsula of Saurashtra or Kathiawar. Whatever the motives, Chandragupta II attacked, dethroned and slew the Western Satrap, Rudrasimha, and annexed his dominion. The war must have been a long one. The annexation of the territory is proved by coins and not by any inscription. According to Dr. V.A. Smith, "The annexation of Saurashtra and Malwa not only added to the empire provinces of exceptional wealth and fertility, but opened up to the paramount power free access to the ports of the Western coast; and thus placed Chandragupta II in the direct touch with the sea-borne commerce with Europe through Egypt and brought his court and subjects under the influence of the European ideas which travelled with the goods of the Alexandrian merchants".

It is stated that Chandragupta II conquered Vahilka, which has been identified with Balkh or Bactria. We do not have any details of this campaign. It is possible that the Kushan rulers who had accepted the sovereignty of Samudragupta might have revolted and thus arose the necessity of putting them down. It is also possible that Chandragupta II wanted to establish the authority on a firmer basis over that area and consequently undertook the expedition.

Chandragupta II is also described as Vikramaditya. However, this does not mean that he was the same king who founded the Vikram Era in 58 B.C.

*Estimate.* According to Dr. V.A. Smith, Chandragupta II was a strong and vigorous ruler, well-qualified to govern and augment an extensive empire. He loved high-sounding titles which proclaimed his martial prowess. He was fond of depicting himself on his coins as engaged in successful personal combat with a lion.

Although Chandragupta II himself was a staunch Vaishnav, he did not hesitate to appoint persons of other sects to high offices in the state. His general was a Buddhist. His Minister of War and Peace was a worshipper of Siva. Dr. Majumdar points out that the work started by Samudragupta was completed by Chandragupta II. He assimilated into the organisation of the empire not only the tribal states and kingdoms on the border but also the territories ruled by the Sakas and Kushans. The view of Professor R.D. Banerji was that Chandragupta II raised the kingdom left by this father to the status of an empire. He became the virtual master of northern India by destroying the Scythians of the Punjab and Western India. He was unquestionably the paramount sovereign of India at the time of his death.

*Fahien* (399-411 A.D.) During the reign of Chandragupta II, India was visited by Fahien, the Chinese traveller. He came to India by the land route and went back by the sea route. On his journey, he passed through about 30 countries. He spent six years on travel alone and another six years on study in India. We are told that he had to spend "three years in writing and speaking Sanskrit and copying out the disciplines." His main object in coming to India was to get the Buddhist Books of Discipline which had become practically unknown in China. Four other persons joined him in his mission but unlike Fahien, they have not left behind any account of what they saw and did.

Fahien visited Shan-shan where he saw 4,000 Buddhists of the Hinayana school. In the Tartar countries, he saw many Buddhists studying Indian language and books. In Khotan, he saw thousands of Buddhist monks of the Mahayana school. At the Gomati monastery alone, there were more than 3,000 monks and there were 14 such monasteries in Khotan. There were 1,000 Buddhist monks in Kashgarh whose king was also a Buddhist belonging to the Hinayana school. Fahien visited Gandhara, Taxila and Peshawar which were full of Buddhist monuments. In Afganistan, Fahien found 3,000 Buddhist monks belonging to the Hinayana and Mahayana schools. He also visited Bannu which had many Buddhist monks. In the Punjab, Fahien saw many Buddhist monasteries and he estimates the number of monks there at more than 10,000. At Mathura alone, Fahien found 20 monasteries with 30,000 Buddhist monks. Fahien visited the country known as the Middle Kingdom. He visited Sravasti which was full of Buddhist monuments. He visited Buddhist places like Lumbini, Vaisali, Nalanda, Gaya, Bodhgaya and Rajgriha. He also visited Ceylon and stayed there for two years. From there, he went to Java and from there back to China.

It is to be observed that Fahien was so much absorbed in his mission that he did not bother to mention the name of Chandragupta II who was ruling at the time. However, he has given us a very pleasing picture of the country with some very intimate details.

Fahien tells us that the region south of Mathura was called the Middle Kingdom (Malwa). This region was the stronghold of Brah-

manism. The Government was very much enlightened and efficient. "The people are numerous and happy ; they have not to register their households, or attend to any magistrates and their rules ; only those who cultivate the royal land have to pay a portion of the gain from it. If they want to go, they go : if they want to stay on, they stay. The king governs without decapitation or other corporal punishments. Criminals are simply fined, lightly, or heavily, according to the circumstances of each case. Even in cases of repeated attempts at wicked rebellion, they only have their right hands cut off. The king's bodyguards and attendants all have salaries. Throughout the whole country the people do not kill any living creature, nor drink intoxicating liquor, nor eat onions or garlic. The only exception is that of the Chandalas. In buying and selling commodities they used cowries."

Fahien tells us that the Chandalas lived separately from the other people. When they entered a city or a bazar they were required to strike a piece of wood as a warning of their approach so that the other people may not be polluted by contact with them. They were the only offenders against the laws of piety and the only hunters, fishermen and butchers.

It was the custom of the "kings, elders, and gentry to build shrines, give lands, houses, gardens, with men and bullocks for cultivation. Binding title-deeds were written out, which subsequent kings did not dare disregard."

The revenue of the Government was mainly derived from the rents of the Crown lands. The royal officers were paid fixed salaries and there was no occasion for them to live on the people.

Charitable institutions were numerous. People built "alongside or out of the way roads, homes of charity where shelter with bed and food and drink is offered to travellers and wandering monks passing to and fro ; but the time allowed for remaining is different in each case."

"Rooms with beds and mattresses, food and clothes are provided for resident and travelling monks without fail : and this is the same in all places. Pagodas are built in honour of Sariputta, Moggalan and Ananda and also in honour of the Abhidhamma, the Vinaya and the Suttas." "Pious families organised subscriptions to make offerings to monks of various articles of clothing and things they need after the annual Retreat." "Down from the time of the Lord Buddha's Nirvana, the kings, chiefmen and householders have raised viharas for the monks, and have provided for their support by endowing them with fields, houses, gardens, servants, and cattle. These church lands are guaranteed to them by copper-plate grants, which are handed down from reign to reign, and no one has had the temerity to cancel them. All the resident priests, who are allotted cells in the viharas, have beds, mats, food and drink supplied to them ; they pass their time in performing acts of mercy, in reciting the scriptures, or in meditation. When a stranger arrives at the monastery, the senior priests escort him to the guest-house, carrying his robes and his alms-bowl for him. They offer him water to wash his feet, and



oil for anointing, and prepare a special meal for him. After he has rested a while, they ask him his rank in the priesthood and according to his rank they assign him a chamber and bedding. During the month after the rain-rest, the pious collect a united offering for the priesthood; and the priests in their turn hold a great assembly and preach the Law. When the priests have received their dues, the householders and Brahmans present them with all sorts of robes and other necessities, and the priests also make one another offerings. And so, ever since the Lord Buddha passed away from the earth, the rules of conduct of the priesthood have been handed down without intermission."

Fahien tells us that the rich people "have instituted in their capitals free hospitals, and hither come all poor or helpless patients, orphans, widows and cripples. They are well taken care of, a doctor attends them, food and medicine being supplied according to their needs. They are all made quite comfortable, and when they are cured, they go away."

Fahien was very much impressed by the city of Pataliputra and also the palace of Asoka. According to him, the palace with its various halls was built by spirits who piled up stones, constructed walls and gates, carved designs, engraved and inlaid after no human fashion. Asoka's palace was still in existence at the time of Fahien's visit. Near a Stupa built by Asoka, Fahien saw two monasteries, one of which was occupied by the followers of the Mahayana school and the other by the Hinayana school. The total number of monks living in both the monasteries was six or seven hundred. However, they were so famous for their learning that their lectures were attended by students and inquirers from all quarters. Fahien himself spent three years there studying Sanskrit. He was happy to get certain books on monastic discipline. Fahien admired the splendid procession of images carried on about 20 huge cars richly decorated. These processions were taken out every year and paraded through the city on the 8th day of the second month. Those were attended by singers and musicians. Fahien tells us that similar processions were common in other parts of the country.

Fahien tells us that the city of Gaya was empty and desolate. The holy places of Bodhgaya were surrounded by jungle. An extensive tract of the country near the foot of the mountains which was thickly populated in the 5th century B.C., was now sparsely inhabited. There were only 200 families in the city of Sravasti. The holy places of Kapilavastu and Kusinagara were waste and deserted. There were only a few monks and lay attendants who clung to the places on account of their sanctity and devotion and lived on the alms offered to them.

It is to be observed that Fahien saw everything through Buddhist spectacles. He ought to have seen that with the revival of Hinduism under the patronage of the Gupta kings, Buddhism had gone into the background. A study of the account of Fahien does not show that Brahmanism was prominent in India.



*Kumara Gupta I (415–455 A.D.).* It is practically certain that Kumara Gupta I ruled from 415 to 455 A.D. The year 415 A.D. is known from his Bilsad inscription. His silver coins give his last date as 455. Thus he had a long reign of 40 years.

Kumara Gupta I issued various types of coins. He issued silver coins for circulation in Western India. He also issued copper coins. The Asvamedha coins must have been issued by him to commemorate the performance of a horse-sacrifice. The legend on these coins is Sri Asvamedhamahendras. The coins of Kumara Gupta show the vastness of his empire. Expansion towards the South is indicated by a find of 1,395 coins in the Satara district.

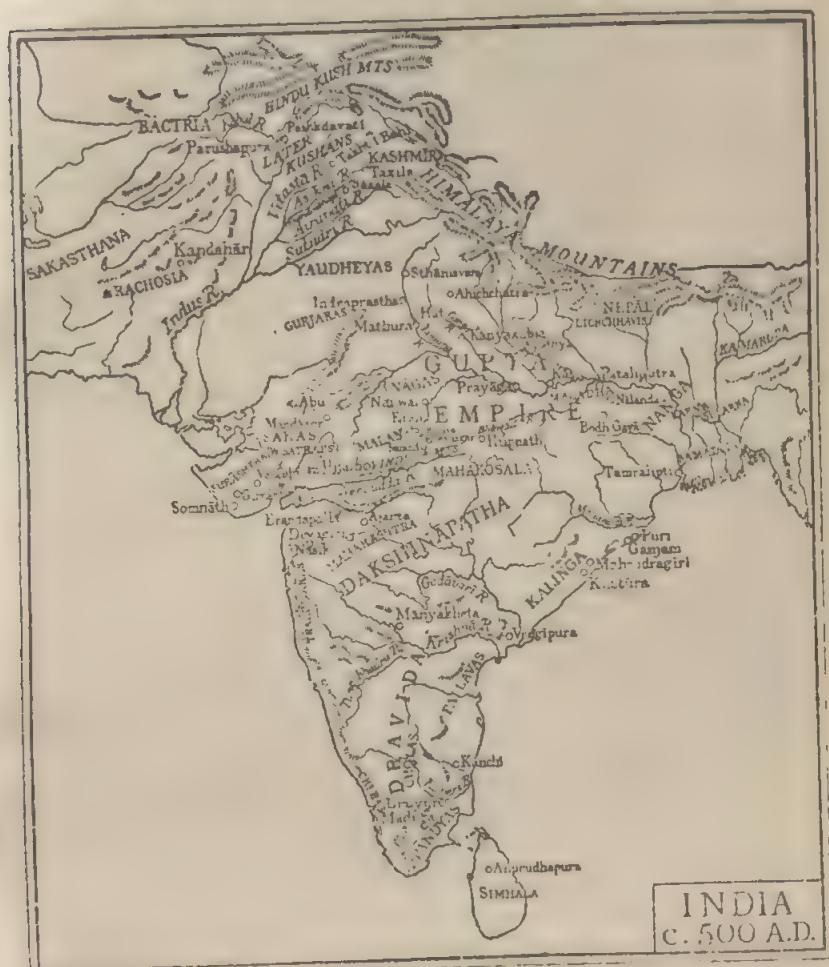
The reign of Kumara Gupta I was on the whole peaceful and prosperous. However, towards the end of his reign, peace seems to have been disturbed by an invasion of an enemy whose identity has not been definitely established. The view of Fleet was that the Gupta empire was attacked by the Pushyamitras. Some scholars do not accept the reading Pushyamitra in the Bhitari inscription and read it as Yudhyamitrams. It is suggested that Narendrasena was the leader of the Pushyamitras but this view is also challenged.

Kumara Gupta I took up the title of Vyaghra-bala-parakrama which means displaying the strength and prowess of a tiger. This has been interpreted to mean that Kumara Gupta I tried to penetrate into the tiger infested forest territories beyond the Narmada. Such an inference may seem to be fanciful but we must not forget that Kumara Gupta issued coins resembling the Traikutaka coinage. It can be inferred from those coins that Kumara Gupta made some conquest in that region.

The view of Dr. R. C. Majumdar is that it is not proper to consider the reign of Kumara Gupta as devoid of any interest or importance. We must not forget that Kumar Gupta gave a stable administration to the country for about 40 years. That could have been done only by a strong and benevolent administration. The repulse of the Hunas and other enemies shortly after his death proves the efficiency of his army. The fact that this efficiency was preserved for nearly 40 years even under peaceful conditions reflects no small credit upon Kumara Gupta. More credit is due to Kumara Gupta's administration and personality than is usually given to him by modern historians.

*Successor of Kumara Gupta I.* The problem of succession after the death of Kumara Gupta I is a ticklish one. Scholars like Dr. V. A. Smith, Panna Lal, Raychaudhuri and others hold that Skand Gupta was the immediate successor of Kumara Gupta I. However, the Bhitari seal of Kumara Gupta makes Puru Gupta the son and successor of Kumara Gupta I. This Puru Gupta was the son of Kumara Gupta from Ananta Devi while Skand Gupta was from Devaki. The real problem is as to who came first, Skand Gupta or Puru Gupta. Scholars like Hoernle, Allan, Smith and Raychaudhuri are of the opinion that Skand Gupta died childless and was succeeded by his brother or half-brother Puru Gupta who was followed by Narasimha Gupta and Kumara Gupta of the Bhitari seal.

Scholars like D.R. Bhandarkar have identified Puru Gupta with Skanda Gupta. There are others who suggest that there was a partition of the Empire between Skanda Gupta and Puru Gupta. According to Basak, after the death of Kumara Gupta I, empire was divided into



two branches. The one branch consisted of Skanda Gupta, Kumara Gupta II, Buddha Gupta and Bhanu Gupta and the other branch consisted of Puru Gupta, Narasimha Gupta and Kumara Gupta III. Allan also believed in the existence of another line parallel to that whose genealogy was established by the Bhitari seal. Dr. R.C. Majumdar once suspected the existence of two branches of the imperial Gupta family which were ultimately united under Buddha Gupta. The view of Dr. B.P. Sinha is that Pura Gupta had a better claim to the throne as he was born from a Mahadevi of Kumara Gupta while the mother of Skanda Gupta was a secondary wife and not

Mahadevi. Puru Gupta came to the throne immediately after the death of his father but he was pushed aside by his abler step-brother, Skanda Gupta.

*Skanda Gupta (455—467 A.D.).* Most of the information about Skanda Gupta and the Huna war is to be found in the Bhitari pillar inscription. It is from this inscription that we learn that Skanda Gupta spent a whole night on the bare ground during the Huna war in the life-time of his father in his efforts to restore the fallen fortunes of his family. It is also stated that after the death of his father, Skanda Gupta conquered his enemies by the strength of his arms and established once again the ruined fortunes of his dynasty. It is also stated in the Junagadh rock inscription that when Skanda Gupta's father had died, he, by his own prowess, humbled his enemies and made subject to himself the earth bounded by the four oceans. He also destroyed the pride of his enemies in the Mlechchha countries and made them announce that victory had been achieved by him.

The importance of the services rendered to India by Skanda Gupta by his victory over the Hunas cannot be minimised. If we remember the cruel devastations of the Hunas from the Danube to the Indus, we can appreciate the value of the great victory of Skanda Gupta over them. All over the vast empire, the people must have heaved a sigh of relief at the great deliverance. This heroic achievement that saved his kingdom from the scourge of a cruel barbaric invasion, justified the assumption of the title of Vikramaditya by Skanda Gupta.

It is pointed out that Skanda Gupta did not stop by merely conquering his enemies. His military spirit drove him towards Digvijaya. However, it was also a Dharmvijaya as Skanda Gupta showed mercy to the vanquished by reinstating them in their kingdoms.

It is stated in the Junagadh rock inscription that the Sudarshana Lake which had been built in the time of Chandragupta Maurya, burst in the time of Skanda Gupta in 450 A.D. The people were in great trouble. However, the breach was repaired and the embankment was renewed by an unlimited expenditure of wealth within a short period of two months.

Skanda Gupta followed a policy of religious toleration. Although he himself was a Bhagavata, he did not interfere with the religion of his officers and his subjects. They were allowed to have their own religious views uninfluenced by the king.

According to Jayaswal, Skanda Gupta was the best (shreshta), a wise (Budhiman) and justice-loving (Dharma-Vatsala) king. He was in the opinion of Indian historians the greatest of the great Gupta sovereigns. Jayaswal himself regarded him as the greatest of the Gupta Kings. He was the only hero in Asia and Europe who could defeat the Hunas at the time of their rise.

The view of Jayaswal was that Skanda Gupta led the flower of orthodox Hindu India and played a game of sheer courage in atta-

cking an enemy which was numerically stronger. Jayaswal did not accept the view of Dr. Smith that the empire of Skanda Gupta succumbed to the repeated Huna attacks and perished after his death. He pointed out that this view is against the information given in the Manjusrimulakalpa and Chandragarbhasutra. It is stated there that the next king Baladitya had his reign without any rival or obstacle. In other words, the wars had been finished by Skanda Gupta and the foreigners had been beaten back. They were so badly beaten that they did not think of invading India as long as the Gupta rule lasted.

*Successors of Skanda Gupta.* Skanda Gupta was succeeded by his brother, Puru Gupta who ruled from 457 to 473 A.D. Puru Gupta must have been an old man at the time of his succession to the throne and no wonder he died after ruling for about 6 years. The Gupta empire suffered a decline in his reign and he could not keep his hold over Saurashtra.

According to Dr. Raychaudhuri, Puru Gupta was succeeded by his son Narasimha Gupta Baladitya. He ruled for hardly one year. He was succeeded by his son Kumara Gupta II who ruled from 473 to 476 A.D. Budha Gupta ruled for about 20 years from 477 to about 495 A.D. The view of Dr. R.K. Mookerji is that the extent of the Gupta Empire did not shrink under Budha Gupta. As a matter of fact, he was able to recover some of its territory and prestige lost in the time of his predecessors.

Budha Gupta was succeeded by Tathagata Gupta who in turn was succeeded by Baladitya II. At this time, the supremacy of the Guptas was challenged by Toramana, a Huna Chief, in Central India. Hiuen Tsang tells us that Baladitya was able to make Mihirkula and his son Toramana as prisoners. However, he set them at liberty at the request of his mother. Baladitya was given the title of the bravest man on earth, a mighty king, equal to Partha.

According to Dr. Raychaudhuri, Kumara Gupta III and his three predecessors, Krishna Gupta, Harshagupta and Jivitagupta should be placed in the period between 510 A.D. and 554 A.D. We know practically nothing about Krishna Gupta. He may have fought against Yasodharman. Krishna Gupta was succeeded by Deva-Shri Harshagupta. He had to fight against his enemies but their names are not known. He was succeeded by Jivitagupta I. He probably succeeded in re-establishing the power of his family in the territory lying between the Himalayas and the sea. He was succeeded by Kumara Gupta III. He had to face many difficulties. The Gaudas, the Andhras and the Sulikas revolted. The king of the Andhras had thousands of elephants and he crossed the Godavari river with a desire to conquer the Eastern region and performed 11 horse sacrifices. The Sulikas have been identified with the Chalukyas. The Gaudas revolted in Western Bengal. The Maukharis began to assert themselves in Upper Gangetic Valley.

Kumara Gupta III was succeeded by Damodar Gupta. He continued to fight against the Maukharis and ultimately lost his life.



He was succeeded by his son Mahasena Gupta. He made an alliance with the Maukharis.

Mahasena Gupta was succeeded by Devagupta II. It is possible that Devagupta II was the lord of Malwa and was responsible for the murder of Grahavarman Maukhari and was himself defeated by Rajyavardhana. Devagupta II was succeeded by Madhavagupta who was the younger son of Mahasena Gupta. He remained a subordinate ally of Harshavardhana. He also resided at the court of Harshavardhana. He was succeeded by Adityasena who possessed remarkable vigour and ability. He performed many Asvamedha and other sacrifices. He renewed his contact with the Gaudas and the Maukharis. He was ruling in the year 672-73 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Devagupta III. The latter was succeeded by his son, Vishnugupta II. Jivtugupta II was the last king. Probably, the Gupta empire was finally destroyed by the Gaudas. Petty Gupta princes continued to rule even during the 12th and 13th centuries A.D. Thus it was that by slow degrees, the house of the imperial Guptas disappeared.

*Causes of Downfall of the Gupta Empire.* The Gupta empire which was built up by the bravery of Samudragupta and Chandragupta II, began to decline and ultimately collapsed completely towards the end of 6th century A.D. The decline and fall of the Gupta Empire can be attributed to many causes.

It has already been pointed out that Skanda Gupta had to exert himself strenuously to maintain the integrity of the empire against the attacks of the Pushyamitras and Hunas. There was a lot of confusion in the country after his death. The result is that it is practically impossible to give a definite account of the history of the Imperial Guptas after his death. We have the names of many kings but it is difficult to ascertain their dates and their relation with one another. There was no law of primogeniture for succession to the throne and it is possible that there may have been struggles for the throne. It was suggested that there were rival Gupta rulers ruling the country at the same time from their respective capitals. The only rulers of any importance after Skanda Gupta were Puru Gupta, Kumargupta II and Buddha Gupta and the others did not exercise much influence. The result was that they were not able to check the decay that had set in and no wonder the Gupta Empire fell.

The foreign invasions also played their part in bringing about the downfall of the Gupta Empire. The stability of the Gupta empire was seriously threatened by the Pushyamitras in the time of Kumara Gupta I. However, they were beaten back by Skanda Gupta. Later on, the Hunas appeared on the scene. It is true that the Gupta kings were successful against the Hunas, but that does not mean that the Huna invasions had absolutely no effect on the fortunes of the Gupta Empire. Their repeated attacks must have exhausted the resources of the Gupta Empire. It is generally believed by historians that Huna invasions were the principal cause of the downfall of the Gupta Empire. However, Dr. R. C. Majumdar does not subscribe to this view. According to him, the gates of India

were barred successfully against the Hunas throughout the 6th century A.D. In spite of the temporary successes of Tormana and Mihirkula, the Hunas never counted as a permanent factor in Indian politics except in Kashmir and Afghanistan which were outside the frontiers of the Gupta Empire.

According to Dr. Majumdar, the death blow to the Gupta Empire was dealt not by the Hunas but by the ambitious chiefs like Yasodharman. It is true that the Hunas caused destruction on a large scale but the force of their success was spent up very soon. However, the rift caused by Yasodharman widened gradually and ultimately the Gupta Empire was completely smashed. To begin with, Yasodharman was merely a local chief. He took advantage of the troubled situation in Malwa and established his independent authority. He became so strong that he not only defeated Mihirkula but was also able to defy the Gupta Emperor. He might have made many conquests at the cost of the Gupta empire although their exact nature and extent is not known. It is stated in the Mandasor inscription that his suzerainty was acknowledged over the area bounded by the Himalayas in the North, the ocean in the West, the Brahmaputra in the East and Ganjam district in the South. It appears that Yasodharman could not maintain his position for a long time. He rose and fell like a meteor. However, his dazzling military success led others to follow his example. If Yasodharman could defy the Gupta Empire, there was no reason why others could not do likewise. In such an atmosphere, the future of the Gupta empire was doomed.

Many chiefs revolted against the Gupta empire. The Maukharis gradually rose to power in Uttar Pradesh and were successful in setting up an independent kingdom towards the middle of the 6th century A.D. The Maukhari dynasty of Kanauja was founded by Harivarman. About the year 554, Isanavarman measured swords with the Guptas and probably also with the Hunas. He also took up the title of Maharajadhiraja. For about a quarter of a century from 554 A.D. to about 580 A.D., the Maukharis were unquestionably the strongest political power in Northern India. Isanavarman wrested a large portion of territory from the Guptas. He defeated the Andhras and got a portion of their territory. He also conquered a part of Bengal.

In the time of Skanda Gupta, Saurashtra was governed by a Goptri named Parnadatya. He was himself appointed by Skanda Gupta as the Viceroy. However, after some time, Bhatarka, a chief of the Maitrika clan, established himself in this region as a military governor with his capital at Valabhi. Dharasena I was his immediate successor. Both Bhatarka and Dharasena I took up the title of Senapati. However, the next successor named Dronasimha took up the title of Maharaja and the same was recognized by the Gupta king. A branch of the dynasty established itself in the Western part of Malwa in the later half of the 6th century A.D. and made extensive conquests. Another branch continued to rule at Valabhi. Dhruvasena II of Valabhi married the daughter of Harsha. His son

Dharasena IV took up the title of Paramabhattacharak Parameshwar Chakravartin. It is clear from above that the Maitrikas became independent of the Gupta Empire and that was bound to affect adversely the fortunes of the Gupta Empire.

The later Guptas ruled in Malwa and Magadha. To begin with, they were feudatories of the Imperial Guptas and perhaps fought to save the Gupta Empire. However, later on, they set themselves up as independent rulers at the same time as the Maukharis did.

It was at the same time that Vanga, South and East Bengal, shook off Gupta's suzerainty. Vainyagupta ruled in East Bengal with the title of Maharaja at the beginning of the 6th century A.D. Later on, the rulers of Vanga took up the title of Maharajadhiraja and struck gold coins in their own name like the Gupta emperors.

In the 4th and 5th centuries, Bengal acknowledged the suzerainty of the Gupta emperors. In the Allahabad pillar inscription, there is a reference to Samatata as border state. Northern Bengal or Paundravardhana Bhukti was a part of the Gupta empire in the time of Kumaragupta I. However, the Gaudas rose into prominence in Bengal and shook off the Gupta yoke in the second half of the 6th century A.D. We have little information about the early kings of the Gaudas. The names of the Gauda kings were Dharamaditya, Gopachandra, Somacharadeva and Jainaga. Sasanka, a contemporary of Harsha, belonged to the Gauda line. The very fact that these Gauda kings took up the title of Maharajadhiraja shows that they did not acknowledge the suzerainty of the Gupta king and acted as independent rulers.

It is well-known that the earlier Gupta kings were the patrons of Hinduism in a militant form. However, some of the later Gupta kings such as Budha Gupta, Tathagata Gupta and Baladitya came to have Buddhist leanings. This new development was bound to affect adversely the fortunes of the Gupta empire. Like the Mauryas after Asoka, proper emphasis was not put on military efficiency. In the absence of such a thing, it would have been impossible to maintain the integrity of the empire. Hiuen Tsang tells us that when Mihirkula was ruling at Sakala or Sialkot, he proceeded to invade the territory of Baladitya, the Gupta king. When the latter heard of this, he addressed his ministers in these words: "I hear that these thieves are coming and I cannot fight with them (their troops); by the permission of my ministers I will conceal my poor person among the bushes of the morass." Not only he said so, he actually withdrew to an island with many of his subjects. It is stated by Hiuen Tsang that Mihirkula was made a prisoner but was allowed to go on the request of the mother of Baladitya. It is not possible to say how far the story of Baladitya as stated by Hiuen Tsang is true but it is clear that these Gupta kings did not possess much courage or military strength. Their kindness and piety was bound to affect adversely the fortunes of the Gupta empire. Such rulers could not maintain their supremacy in the country and were bound to be thrown into the background.



*The Hunas.* The Hunas were a band of nomad savages. They originally lived in the neighbourhood of China. They advanced towards the West and divided themselves into two parts. One part of them went towards the Volga and the other to the Oxus. Those Hunas who went to Europe were called the Black Hunas and their greatest leader was Attila. Those Hunas who came and settled in Persia and India came to be known as the White Hunas or Ephthalites. They became powerful in the Oxus valley towards the middle of the 5th century. In 484 A.D., their king Akhschounwar defeated and killed Feroz, the Sassanian ruler of Persia. This victory added to the prestige of the Hunas and by the end of the 6th century A.D., they ruled over a vast empire with their principal capital at Balkh.

*Tormana.* We do not possess much reliable information with regard to the activities of the Hunas in India. The names of two kings, Toramana and Mihirkula, are known from coins and inscriptions. They are considered to be Hunas but there is no conclusive evidence with regard to their nationality. Song-yun, a Chinese Ambassador to the Huna king of Gandhara in 520 A.D., refers to the conquest and occupation of this kingdom by the Hunas two generations before his time. Towards the close of the 5th or the beginning of the 6th century A.D., Tormana advanced from the Punjab and conquered a large part of Western India. Even Eran was included in his dominion. The coins of Toramana testify to his foreign origin and also prove that he ruled over parts of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab and Kash'mir. Probably, he was connected with the Huna family ruling in Gandhara.

*Mihirkula.* Toramana was succeeded by his son Mihirkula in about 515 A.D. According to Hiuen Tsang, Sakala was the capital of Mihirkula. He also states that "Mihirkula established his authority in the town and ruled over India. He subdued all the neighbouring provinces without exception." At first, he took some interest in Buddhism but later on he "issued an edict to destroy all the priests through the five Indies, to overthrow the law of Buddha, and leave nothing remaining."

The Rajatarangini refers to Mihirkula as a powerful king who ruled over Gandhara and Kashmir and conquered Southern India and Ceylon. Mihirkula is described as a man of violent disposition. Stories of his cruelty are told at great length.

It appears that Mihirkula was a powerful king who overran a large part of Northern India. An inscription of the year 530 A.D. shows that his sovereignty extended at least up to Gwalior. Probably his authority was acknowledged even beyond that. Cosmas describes the Huna chief as the lord of India. However, Mihirkula was defeated soon by the Gupta Emperor.

It is stated that Mihirkula led an expedition against the ruler of Ceylon. "His queen was wearing a Ceylon-made crosslet on her bosom with the print of the Ceylonese King's feet. Mihirkula took it as an insult and invaded Ceylon and destroyed it." It is difficult to say how much truth there is in this tradition.



The exact date of the death of Mihirkula is not known. According to some writers, he died in 540 A.D. There are others who hold the view that he died in 547 A.D. However, Mihirkula was so cruel that "at the time of his death, there was thunder and hail and a thick darkness and the earth shook and a mighty tempest raged." (Hiuen Tsang).

Not much is known about the religion of Mihirkula. His coins bear the figures of the bulls of Siva. It is possible that he was a worshipper of Siva. In the Gwalior inscription, it is stated that Mihirkula built a Sun temple. He might have been a worshipper of the Sun also. As pointed out already, he was very cruel towards Buddhism.

The defeat of Mihirkula appears to have finally crushed the political supremacy of the Hunas in India. After that, they did not remain a great power or even a disturbing element in Indian history. The crushing blow given to their central authority on the Oxus by the Turks and the Persians between 563 and 567 A.D. also ruined their prestige in India. Petty Hun chiefs continued to rule in the Punjab and North-Western India. In course of time, the Hunas were absorbed in Indian society.

*Huna Civilisation.* In the Buddhist Records of the Western World, it is stated that the Hunas "have no written characters and their rules of politeness are very defective. They have no knowledge at all of the movements of heavenly bodies. And, in measuring the years they have no intercalary month or any long or short months ; but they merely divide the year into twelve parts, that is all. There are no instruments of music visible at all. The royal ladies of the Yetha country wear State robes which trail on the ground, three feet and more. They also wear on their heads a horn, in length eight feet or more, three feet of its length being red coral...Both the rich and poor have their distinctive modes of dress. The majority of them do not believe in Buddha. Most of them worship false gods. They kill living creatures and eat their flesh."

It is true that the Hunas ruled in India for a short time, but they certainly affected the country in many ways. Politically, the Huna invasions were partly responsible for the decline and fall of the Gupta empire. The resources of the empire were exhausted. The political unity was destroyed and the country was divided into many small States. The Huna invasions brought chaos and confusion and the people suffered.

From the cultural point of view, the Huna invasions proved to be a great curse. The Hunas destroyed the great monuments of art. They demolished and burnt monasteries and temples. They not only destroyed the best specimens of Gupta art but also burnt valuable records of history. Their destruction has deprived the historians of a lot of useful information.

From the social point of view, the Huna invasions are equally important. The Hunas affected the racial composition of the Indian people. After the loss of their political power in India, the Hunas

settled down in the country. They married Indian wives and were ultimately absorbed in the Hindu society.

The moral effects of the Huna invasion are referred to in these words by Havell : "The strong infusion of Huna blood lowered the high ethical standards of Indo-Aryan tradition and favoured the growth of many of the vulgar superstitions which were never countenanced by the great philosophers and spiritual teachers of Aryavarta."

**The Gupta Administration.** According to Dr. R.N. Sastore, "The administration of the Guptas...cannot be justly claimed to have been genuinely original, but it may be said to have been imposing and benevolent. It was not original because it was founded on the historical traditions of the past and improved and adapted to suit contemporary conditions. It was imposing because of the vastness of its structure the nature of which, however, can best be realised by recollecting that it was composed of the king, the Council of Ministers, the Great Assembly, the feudatories, the departments of state, the officers of the capital, in the provinces and in the villages, with their multifarious duties, the great extent of their authority and the numerical strength of their own subordinates. It was benevolent because it was not a crude autocracy wherein the king was the only and absolute dictator ; it had constitutional checks in the form of the Council of Ministers and the high officials of the states...but more than these, the whole administration was often guided by a judiciously interpreted freedom of constitutional usage surviving in the form of precedents which had almost received the sanction of unwritten law. Its efficiency was such that it reduced the sources of revenue to a regular form, maintained an admirable system of accounts, the evidence of which can be noticed even in the sale of a plot of land in a village and organised its best fiscal resources in such a manner as to enable its rulers to control an empire extending from the principality of Magadha to the borders of Samatata in the east and to boundaries of Saurashtra in the west and from almost the footsteps of the Himalayas in the north to the confines of Central India in the south." (*Life in the Gupta Age*, pp. 318-19).

**Republics.** While monarchy was the prevailing form of Government during the Gupta period, a few republics lingered on in the Punjab and Rajputana. The Madras were in Central Punjab, the Kunindas were in the Kangra valley, the Yaudheyas were in South-eastern Punjab, the Arjunayanas were in Agra-Jaipur tract and the Malavas were in Central Rajasthan. The Prarjunas, the Sanakanikas, the Kakas and the Abhiras were in Central India. These republics disappeared completely after about 400 A.D.

**Monarchy.** The theory of the divinity of kings was popular during the Gupta period. Samudragupta is described as a god who had come to live upon this earth. There are certain rulers who are described as Fifth Lokapalas or Divine protectors. However, all this does not mean that the Gupta kings claimed any infallibility on account of their divinity. The king was required to wait upon the elders, study the art of Government and cultivate righteousness.

Haughty, irreligious and tyrannical kings are condemned. An ideal king was required to build up his body in such a way that he could successfully perform the duties of his high office. The eldest son was usually selected as Yuvaraj. The latter had his separate establishment, both civil and military. With the consent of the king, Yuvaraj could issue orders to the heads of the provincial governments. If the king was old, most of the work of the government fell into his hands. Queens and princesses did not take any active part in the administration. Although Kumaradevi was given a high place, she also did not take an active part in the administration of her husband, Chandragupta I. The same was the case with Dhruvadevi, the queen of Chandragupta II.

The Gupta kings enjoyed a large number of powers. Those powers covered the political, administrative, military and judicial fields. Very often, they were their own commanders-in-chief. Samudragupta, Chandragupta II and Skanda Gupta personally led their armies. The Gupta kings appointed all the governors and important military and civil officers who were also responsible to the king. The governors and their officers had to work under the control and guidance of the king. Likewise, the central secretariat also worked under the personal supervision of the king. The king was the source of all honours and titles. All land in the country was the property of the king who could give away the same to anybody he pleased. He could construct dams, give shelter to foreigners, impose, recover and remit taxes and give justice. If any property was unclaimed, that went into the coffers of the king.

It is wrong to say that the Gupta kings were autocrats. They shared their powers with ministers and other high officers. A large number of powers were delegated to the local bodies such as village Panchayats and town councils. The king was required to adopt all means to win popularity among the people by respecting their wishes and promoting their welfare. The king toured the country with a view to keep himself in touch with the people.

The Gupta emperors generally nominated their successors to the throne. Chandragupta I nominated Samudragupta as his successor. Chandragupta II was nominated by his father and this fact can be gathered from the use of the expression, *Tat-Parigrihita*. It appears that this system of the Guptas was continued even in the time of Harsha.

*King's Council.* It appears that the Gupta rulers had their Councils. Probably it consisted of princes, high officials and feudatories. It appears that one of the duties of the King's Council was to approve or disapprove a successor to the throne.

Kalidas refers to the Mantri-Parishad. According to him, Kanchuki or Chamberlain acted as an agent between the King and the Council. Whatever decisions were arrived at by the Council of Ministers were conveyed to the King through an Amatya. It appears that the matter was placed before the Council of Ministers and efforts were made to arrive at some conclusion. When that was done, the decisions were conveyed to the King who was left to arrive at any



conclusion he pleased. The final word rested with the King. It was the duty of the Council of ministers to advise the King but ultimately it had to obey the verdict of the king. In certain cases, the Council of Ministers acted as a Council of Regency. It was held responsible for making preparations for the coronation of a Yuvaraj or Crown-prince.

*Civil officers.* A large number of officials were employed by the Gupta rulers to carry on the administration of the country. As regards the civil officers, the important among them were the Rajapurusha, the Rajanayaka, Rajaputra, Rajamatya, the Mahasamanta, Mahakumaramatya, Mahapratihara, Kanchuki, Ajnasamcharikas, etc. It is pointed out that Kanchuki was the same official as the Mahapratihara. However, his duty was to look after the inner apartments of the King's women. He was also required to report to the King the arrival of persons who intended to see him. It is possible that Rajamatya might have acted as an adviser to the King. In some cases, Mahasamanta was put on the same footing as the Maharaja and Mahakumaramatya. Rajasthaniya either belonged to the King's residence or that of a Governor.

As regards the Ajnasamcharikas, they were entrusted with the duty of executing all the messages of the King. They have been compared to the courtiers. They also served as guardians and guides.

*Revenue and Police Officers.* It appears that the duties of revenue collection and police were not completely separated. The important officials of these departments were the Uparika, Dashaparadhika, Chauroddharanika, Dandika Dandapashika, Gaulmika, Kshetraprantapala, Kottapala, Angarakshika, and Ayuktaka, Vinayuktaka, Rajuka etc.

*Military Officers.* The military officers referred to in the inscriptions are the Senapati, Mahasenapati, Baladhikrita, Mahabaladhikrita, Dandanayaka, Sandhivigrahika, Mahasandhivigrahika, Gupta, etc. Chitravarma and Bappadeva have been mentioned as the Senapatis. They were the commanders of the forces. However, in the Bijaygadh stone inscription, reference is made to the Mahasenapati who must have been the superior of the Senapati. An inscription mentions Slapaksha as Baladhikrita which has been interpreted as the commander of the forces. In another inscription, Narasimha is described as Mahabaladhikrita which must have been a superior rank. The Dandanayaka must have combined military and judicial duties. The Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta refers to Harisena, Dhruvabhuti and Tilbhattaka as Mahadanayakas. Such an official continued for a very long time. The Mahasandhivigrahika must have been entrusted with the administration of the affairs of war and peace. Such an official is mentioned with reference to Harsha of Kanauj.

An official named Chamupa is sometimes mentioned in the inscriptions but there are no details regarding his functions. Vanapala is also mentioned, but it is difficult to point out to the particular military duties performed by him.



Another official of the Gupta period was a kind of Warden of the Marches or a Governor of a frontier province. Tikina is referred to as the Guardian of the Roads (Margapati) and the Ruler of the North. The Kāummudimahotsava refers to an official called Pratyantapala. Kalidasa refers to the Antapalas.

*Judicial Officers.* Inscriptions refer to such judicial officers as Mahadandanayaka, Mahakshapatalika, etc. Probably, the Mahadandanayaka combined the duties of a judge and a General. The Mahakshapatalika was probably the Great Keeper of Records.

Kalidasa refers to the Dharmasthana. It is possible that in the time of Kalidasa, the king attended such a court in his capital. Kalidasa also refers to the Dharmadhikaras. They were required to be well-versed in the scriptures of Dharma and had to maintain order in the town. They were to see that the hermits in the woods were not disturbed in the prosecution of their penances.

*Punishments.* According to Fahien, punishments were very lenient. To quote him, "The king governs without decapitation or other corporal punishments. Criminals are simply fined lightly or heavily according to the circumstances of each case. Even in cases of repeated attempts at wicked rebellion, they only have their right hand cut off." However, the testimony of Fahien is not accepted and it is pointed out that punishments were pretty harsh in the Gupta period.

Kalidasa tells us that when a thief was caught, he was handed over to the guards known as Rakshinas. The latter made inquiries into the case and cross-examined the thief. The thief was kept in custody near the city gate. If the crime affected royalty, the king himself was informed about the same.

The accused who was condemned to death had "the flowers of death" fastened on him. In the Mudrarakshas, Visakhadatta describes the method of execution adopted in the Gupta period. The condemned person was taken in a procession to the place of execution called Vadhyasthana. On many places on the way, proclamations were made in which the people were informed of the guilt of the condemned person. It appears that an attempt was made to convince the people of the guilt of the accused. However, there were some chances of his escape if some good man offered some money to free the captive, a son was born to the king or an elephant might break loose and thereby set free the condemned person. Bana refers to "clots of red sandal juice wherewith doomed criminals are decked." The body of the condemned person was anointed with red sandal. Red clothes and ornaments were also put on it. Red garlands were also used. The body was besprinkled with meal and pounded incense.

The most brutal form of capital punishment in the Gupta period was the infliction of death by elephants. According to Visakhadatta, Arthapala was caught red-handed while stealing in the house of a businessman. He was condemned to death. When the signal was given, a Mast elephant called death-winner whom murder

was sport, lumbered towards him "with monstrous trunk curled back, while the jangling of his bells was reinforced from the throaty yells from the crowd...the infuriated driver headed him back with blistering words and kicks of unrestrained ferocity." All this was done in the presence of a crowd.

Another cruel punishment was the scooping out of the eyes for committing treason especially in the case of Brahmans. It is pointed out that even the most highly placed officials were not spared if they planned secretly to kill the king. According to Dandin, treason meant the administration of poison to the ruling sovereign, plotting evil against the king and meeting in secret with state officials with a view to murdering the ruler.

During the Gupta period, burglars and thieves frequented the houses of the prostitutes, tap-rooms, gambling places, stalls of bakers, sheds of parks, huts of the ascetics, empty temples, bazars of the market, market-quadrangles, and squares. The police also visited these places to catch them. The suspected persons were arrested by the police and interrogated. Loitering about on the roads and in the cemetery implied imminent arrest and imprisonment. If a drunkard was found on the road, he was liable to be arrested.

Four kinds of ordeals seem to have been employed to ascertain the guilt or innocence of a person. "These are by water, by fire, by weighing and by poison. In the water ordeal, the accused is put in one sack and a stone in another, then the two sacks are connected and thrown into a deep stream; if the sack containing the stone floats, and the other sinks, the man's guilt is proved. The fire ordeal requires the accused to kneel and tread on hot iron, to take it in his hand and lick it; if he is innocent, he is not hurt, but he is burnt if he is guilty. In the weighing ordeal, the accused is weighed against a stone; and if the latter is lighter, the charge is false, if otherwise it is true. The poison ordeal requires that the right hind leg of a ram be cut off, and according to the portion assigned to the accused to eat, poisons are put into the leg, and if the man is innocent he survives, and if not the poison takes effect."

It appears that the object of heavy punishments was to deter the people from committing crimes. It was not intended to reform them.

*Administrative Divisions.* A study of the Gupta inscriptions shows that there was an hierarchy of administrative divisions from top to bottom. The Empire was called by various names such as Rajya, Rashtra, Desha, Mandala, Prithvi and Avani. It was divided into provinces which were styled as Bhukti, Pradesha and Bhoga. References are made to Airikina Pradesha, Nagara-bhukti, Tira-bhukti, Pundravardhanabhukti, Uttaramandlabhukti, etc. Provinces were divided into Vishayas and put under the control of Vishayapatis. A Vishayapati administered the Vishaya with the help of the Adhikarana which consisted of four representatives: Nagarasreshthin, Sarthavaha, Prathamakulika and Prathama Kayastha. The Nagarasreshthin was the representative of the merchants guild of the town.

Sarthavaha was a representative of the trading class as a whole. Prathamakulika represented the artisans. Prathama Kayastha was the nominee of clerical interests. A part of a Vishya was called Vithi. A union of villages was called Pethaka and Santaka. Smaller units or divisions of a village were called Agrahara and Patta.

*Provincial Administration.* The head of the provincial administration was known by various names and some of them were Uparika, Gopta, Bhogika, Bhogapati and Rajasthaniya. In certain cases, the son of the king or Rajaputra was appointed the Governor. The minister in attendance on the royal Governor was called Kumaramatya.

References are made to various officials of the provincial administration. Baladhikaranika held the office of the head of the army or the military. Dandapasadhikaranika was the chief of the police. Ranabhandarika was the chancellor of the military exchequer. Mahadandanayaka was the Chief Justice. Vinayasthiti Sthapaka was the Minister of Law and Order. Bhatasvapati was the commandant of the infantry and cavalry. Mahapillupati was the commandant of the elephant forces. Reference is also made to Sadhanika who had to deal with debts and fines. The Mallasarul copper plate inscription refers to Kartakritika, Bhogapatika, Hiranya-Samudyika (Currency Officer), Tadayuktaka (Treasury Officer), Audrangika (Collector of the Udranga tax), Aurna-Sthanika (Superintendent of silk factories), Agraharika (Superintendent of the Agraharas), Chauroddharanika (Inspector-General of Police).

*District Administration.* The Vishayapati was assisted in his work by the Mahattaras (village elders); Gramikas (village headmen), Saulkikas (collectors of customs and tolls), Gaulmika (officers in charge of forests and forts), Agraharikas, Ashtakuladhikaranikas (officers probably in charge of groups of 8 Kulas or families in the local area), Dhruvadhikaranikas (officers in charge of land revenue), Bhandagaradhikrita (Treasurer), Ralavataka (Accountant), Pustapala etc.

The record office of the district was called Akshapatala and was under the control of Mahakshapatalika. There were many clerks in the department whose duty was to write and copy out the records and documents. The writers were called Lekhakas and Diviras. The officer-in-charge of the documents was known as the Karanika and the officer who drafted them was known as the Sasayitri or Kartri. In addition to the above, there were other officers known as Sarvadyakshas or general superintendents. Kupa-putras worked under them and their duty was to check corruption.

*City Administration.* The head of the city administration was known as the Purapala or Nagara-Rakshaka. There is also a reference to Purapala-Uparika and it is pointed out that he controlled the heads of the various cities. The head of Dasapura was called Dasapura-Pala. A city was governed by a Parishad. Avasathika was a special officer who acted as the Superintendent of Dharam-salas.



*Village Administration.* Gramika was the head of the village but in addition to him there were other officials known as Dutas or messengers, Simakarmakaras or boundary-makers, herds-men, Karti, Lekhaka (Scribes), Dandika (Chastiser), Chauroddhavanika and Sata-bhatas. Reference is also made to the Parishad or the village assembly. It is not possible to describe the exact duties and functions of the Parishad but this institution continued to exist even in the time of Bana who refers to the Panchakula.

According to Dr. Altekar, the Gupta administration was on the whole well organised, both at the Centre and in the provinces. The Central secretariat worked efficiently and could keep itself well-informed about the happenings in the districts and villages. Gupta administration secured safety to its subjects both from foreign invasions and internal disturbances for a long time. The administration of criminal law was a happy combination of justice and humanity. The Government looked after the material and spiritual welfare of its subjects. The people had a hand in the administration of the country as the government was decentralised and the local bodies enjoyed a large number of powers.

*Revival of Hinduism.* Dr. Keith rightly points out that the Gupta empire signified a distinct revival of Brahmanism and Hinduism. However, this does not mean that Hinduism had vanished from India during the period of the supremacy of Buddhism. It is true that from the time of Asoka, Buddhism had become the state religion and consequently Hinduism had been thrown into the background. However, after a temporary eclipse, it came into prominence under the Sungas who were Brahmins. The performance of Asvamedha sacrifices by Pushyamitra indicates the revival of the practices of the Brahmanical religion. The same was the case under the Kanvas and the Andhras. The latter played an important part in the popularisation of the Brahmanical rituals. They performed many horse sacrifices and showered favours on the Brahmanas.

It might be expected that the foreigners who came to India might have been attracted to Buddhism which did not believe in the caste system. However, that was not actually the case. It is true that Kanishka patronised Buddhism in his later years, but the next king Vasudeva reverted to the devotion for Siva as was done by Kadphises II. Likewise, the later Saka satraps of Saurashtra seem to have been more inclined towards Hinduism than towards Buddhism. They patronised Sanskrit, the language of the Hindus and not the other languages which were patronised by the Buddhists. The Girnar inscription of Rudradaman is in Sanskrit and not in any other language.

The rise of Mahayanism also brought Buddhism nearer to Hinduism. In place of Pali which was the language of Buddhist canon, Mahayanism used Sanskrit in its religious literature. The adoption of Sanskrit was a victory of the Brahmins. The rise of a religion and literature and language go together. Likewise, the popularity of Sanskrit strengthened the cause of Hinduism. Under



Mahayanism, idol worship was introduced into Buddhism. Buddha came to be surrounded by a large number of Bodhisattvas who attended upon him and were the intermediaries between the Buddha and his worshippers. This fact also brought Buddhism nearer to Hinduism. The chances of merging Buddhism into Hinduism were increased.

Even before the rise of the Guptas, the Bharsivas had popularised the cult of Hinduism by performing ten horse sacrifices at the Dashasvamedha Ghat on the Ganges. However, it was left to the Gupta kings to extend the royal patronage to Hinduism and make it a State religion. It is true that the Gupta kings were not fanatics and they gave religious toleration to all. As a matter of fact, Samudragupta patronised Vasubandhu, the eminent Buddhist scholar. However, it cannot be denied that the Gupta kings were orthodox Hindus who were usually guided by Brahman advisers and who themselves had a good knowledge of Sanskrit. Chandragupta II is described as Rajadhirajarishi. This title is a combination of a king and Rishi or sage. Both Samudragupta and Kumaragupta performed horse sacrifices. It was in this atmosphere that Hinduism progressed by leaps and bounds. Temples were constructed to worship the various Hindu deities. A lot of importance was given to the worship of the Avatara or incarnations of Vishnu. It was maintained that Vishnu took birth from time to time in various forms to save the world from the assaults of the demons or powers of evil. Ten incarnations of Vishnu are described in the Puranas. As the fish, Vishnu saved Manu, the father of the human race, from the Cosmic Flood. As the tortoise, Vishnu supported on his back Mount Mandara, which the gods used as a churning stick in order to churn from the Sea of Milk the fourteen precious objects for the benefit of mankind. As the boar, the man-lion and the dwarf, Vishnu slew various demons determined to destroy the world. As Parshu Ram, the champion of Brahmanism, Vishnu exterminated the Kshatriyas. The first six incarnations of Vishnu were purely mythical. The next three incarnations were historic or semi-historic personages. Buddha was regarded by the followers of Vishnu as an incarnation of Vishnu and he was sent to mislead demons and sinners. The Kalki Avtar was still to come. Every deity had a female counterpart. The female counterpart of Vishnu was Laxmi, the goddess of prosperity and beauty who rose from the ocean when it was churned by the gods and demons. Vishnu was represented in art as sleeping upon the World—Serpent, Shesha or Ananta, or riding upon his Vahana or vehicle, the Garuda. The practice of depicting the gods as many-armed and many-headed became popular in this period. The god holds in his hands the emblems of his power, the thunder-bolt, the discus, the conch-shell, the lotus and the trident. The Salagarama is supposed to be sacred to Vishnu and his sacred plant is the Tulsi or basil plant.

Siva or Mahadeva is the antithesis of Vishnu. He is the lord of Yogis who seek union with the World Soul by intense concentration. He sits for endless ages in meditation among the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, smeared with ashes and wearing a necklace

of skulls and river Ganges flowing from his long hairs. Siva is also considered to be the god of fertility and procreation. He is worshipped under the symbol of the Linga or phallus and his vehicle is Nandi, the bull. Siva is sometimes represented as the Lord of the Dance or Nataraja. His consort is Parvati or Uma, a goddess of sublime beauty and sweetness. In the form of Kali or Durga, she is worshipped with bloody and obscene rites.

*Literature.* The Gupta period has rightly been called the golden age of Sanskrit literature. According to Barnett, "The Gupta period is in the annals of classical India almost what the Periclean age is in the History of Greece." Dr. Smith compares the Gupta period with the Elizabethan and Stuart period in the history of England. According to him, in India all the lesser lights are outshone by the brilliancy of Kalidasa as in England all the smaller authors are overshadowed by Shakespeare. But as the Elizabethan literature would still be rich even if Shakespeare had not written, so in India if Kalidasa's works had not survived, enough of other men's writings would remain to distinguish his age as extraordinarily fertile in literary achievement.

The most important works of Kalidasa were the *Abhijnana-Shakuntala*, *Ritusamhara*, *Malavikagnimitram*, *Kumarasambhava*, *Meghaduta*, *Raghuvamsa* and *Vikrama-Urvishyam*. According to Indian theorists, of all the arts, drama is the best, out of the dramas, *Shakuntala* is the best, out of the drama of *Shakuntala*, the fourth Act is the best and out of that Act, the verses in which Kanva bids farewell to his adopted daughter is the best. In the *Shakuntala*, Kalidasa's genius attains its highest point. While the *Malavikagnimitram* is the first work of the poet, the *Raghuvamsa* is a work of his maturity. Critics point out that the poetry of Kalidasa is famous for its grace, simplicity, sentiments and figures of speech. His similes are beautiful, appropriate and of different varieties. Kalidasa has no equal in characterisation. He is superb in describing the emotions of love and pathos. There are many pithy sayings in beautiful language.

*Bhasa.* Bhasa has been praised by Kalidasa and Bana but scholars differ with regard to his age. According to one view, the 13 Trivandrum plays do not belong to Bhasa. None of them says that their author was Bhasa. Many of the verses attributed to Bhasa by later writers are not to be found in those plays. The advocates of the other view point out that the *Svapna-Vasavadatta* of the Trivandrum plays possesses most of the features noticed by the ancient critics and poets about Bhasa's drama of that name. All the 13 Trivandrum plays are similar in language and dramatic technique, and all of them must be ascribed to one person. Bhasa may be taken to have flourished about 300 A.D. The names of the 13 Trivandrum plays are *Madhyamavyayoga*, *Dutavakya*, *Balacharitra*, *Pratima*, *Abhisheka*, *Avimarka*, *Pratijna-Yaugandharyana*, *Svapna-Vasavadatta*, *Charudatta*, *Duta-Ghatotkach*, *Karnabhara*, *Urubhanga* and *Panchatantra*.

*Sudraka*. *Sudraka*, author of the *Mrichchhakatika* or the Little Clay Cart, appears to have flourished in the fourth century A.D. The *Mrichchhakatika* is one of the most interesting dramas in Sanskrit literature.

*Visakhadatta* wrote the *Mudra-Rakshasa* which gives the story of the revolution which put Chandragupta Maurya on the throne of Magadha. *Visakhadatta* is also considered to be the author of the drama called *Devī-Chandraguptam*. *Bharavi* wrote the *Kiratarjuniyam*. *Bhatti* wrote the *Ravanavadha*, also known as *Bhattikavya*. This book illustrates the rules of grammar while giving the story of Rama. There are some scholars who identify *Bhatti* with *Bhartrihari*, the recluse courtier, philosopher, grammarian and poet in turn, who wrote the famous Three *Satakas*. *Matrigupta* and *Bhartrimetha* belong to the Gupta period, but their works seem to have been lost. Dramatists *Saumilla* and *Kuluputra* belong to this period.

The original *Panchatantra* was composed by *Vishnugarman* during the Gupta period. This book has played an important part in the literature of the world. About 200 versions of the book exist in more than 50 languages of the world, e.g., English, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, Greek, etc.

The *Puranas* were written much before the Gupta period but now those were brought up-to-date. The history of the dynasties of the Kali age was brought up to about 350 D. A number of chapters were added in glorification of Vishnu and Siva.

The *Smritis* of *Yajnavalkya*, *Narada*, *Katyayana* and *Brihaspati* were written during this period. It is pointed out that the *Smriti* of *Yajnavalkya* is the most systematic and evenly balanced work on the subject. The *Nitisara* of *Kamandaka* was probably written by some minister of the Gupta kings. The *Hitopadesha* or the Book of Wise Counsels was probably written during the Gupta period. *Ishwarakrishna* wrote his famous *Sankhyakarika* or a commentary on the *Sankhya* system of philosophy. *Vatsyayana* wrote *Nyaya-bhashya* on the *Nyaya* system of philosophy. *Parastapada* wrote *Padarthadharma Samgraha* on the *Vaisesika* system of philosophy. *Vyasabhashya* was written on *Yoga* philosophy. Philosophers like *Baudhyayan*, *Upavarsha* and *Bhartriprapaneh* flourished during the Gupta period. *Dandin* wrote *Kavyadarsa* and *Dasakumarcharita* during the Gupta period. *Asanga*, the Buddhist writer, wrote *Yogacharabhumisastra* and *Mahayan Samparigraha*. *Vasubandhu* wrote many books on Mahayan and Hinayan Buddhist philosophy. *Dignaga* wrote *Pramana Samuchchaya*. *Parmartha* wrote a biography of *Vasubandhu*. *Chandragomin*, a Buddhist scholar, wrote a grammar called *Chandra-Vyakarana*.

*Aryabhatta*, *Varahamihira* and *Brahmagupta* were "the foremost astronomers and mathematicians of the world." *Aryabhatta* wrote *Surya-Siddhanta*. In that book, he explained the true causes of solar and lunar eclipses. *Aryabhatta* was the first Indian astronomer to declare that the earth revolves round its axis. He explained the variations in planetary motions. The *Brihat Samhita*



of *Varahamihira* deals with astronomy, botany, natural history and physical geography. *Varahamihira* also wrote *Pancha Siddhantika*, *Brihajataka* and *Laghujataka*. *Brahmagupta* was a great astronomer and mathematician of his age. He anticipated Newton by declaring that "all things fall to the earth by a law of nature; for it is the nature of the earth to attract and keep things." The *Navanitakam* was written during the Gupta period. This book contains recipes, formulae and prescriptions. *Palakapya* wrote *Hastyayurveda* on the veterinary science.

*Harishena* who was the General and Foreign Minister of *Samudragupta*, wrote his famous *Prasasti* or panegyric on *Samudragupta* which is found on the Allahabad Pillar Inscription. The *Prasasti* is a poem of great merit. The author shows himself to be a master of simple and ornate styles. *Vasulka* wrote the *Prasasti* on *Yasovarman*. *Ravisanti* wrote the *Haraha Prasasti* of the *Maukhari* king. *Vatsabhathi* wrote the *Mandasor Prasasti* of *Kumaragupta* and *Bandhuvarman*. *Kubja* wrote the *Talgunda Prasasti*. *Saba* was a poet in the court of *Chandragupta II*.

**The Gupta Art.** The glories of the Gupta period are partly due to Gupta art. It was during this period that there was an unprecedented artistic activity all over India. Sculpture, architecture, painting and terracotta made such achievements as have not been excelled after that. Some of our most beautiful monuments are a heritage of the Gupta period. *Mathura*, *Banaras* and *Patna* were the centres of artistic activity during that period.

There are many distinguishing features of the Gupta art. We find both refinement and restraint in that art. The Gupta artist relied more on elegance than on volume. Their art shows simplicity of expression and a spiritual purpose. There is balance and freedom from conventions. There is sobriety in the use of drapery, ornaments and other things of decoration. There is naturalness in the Gupta art. The Gupta artists seem to have been masters of technique.

The Gupta art is famous for *Rupam* or concept of beauty. The Gupta artists applied themselves to the worship of beautiful form in many ways. They worshipped art in order to awaken a new sense of spiritual joy and nobility.

We find in Gupta art a profound religious and spiritual appeal. The painted forms of gods, sages, kings, queens and their attendants in the *Ajanta* caves give an idea of good and evil.

We find in Gupta art the simplicity of style and felicity of expression. Great ideas are given a concrete form in a natural and easy manner. The outer form and the inner meaning are linked up in the same way as body and mind are connected.

Scholars are of the opinion that the Gupta art represented ancient Indian art at its best. It not only occupied a dominant position in India but also was taken to Greater India. It did wonders both at home and abroad. Fresco paintings were particularly taken to Central Asia and China.



*Sculpture.* According to Dr. V. S. Agrawala, "Sculpture has contributed most to the high esteem in which the Gupta art is held. Under the stroke of the master's chisel, the stone became malleable, as it were, and was transformed into figures of permanent beauty and grace. The success of Gupta sculpture lies in its balanced synthesis between the obtruding sensuality of the Kushana figures and the symbolic obstruction of the early mediaeval work."

Nudity, as a rule, was eliminated from the Gupta art. The Gupta artists employed drapery to conceal the charms of the flesh. This can be seen from the images of the Buddha belonging to the Gupta period. We have the seated Buddha at Sarnath, the standing Buddha in the Mathura Museum and the copper statue of Buddha from Sultanganj. We find not only the smile of Buddha but also his serene contemplative mood. The images of Buddha of Gupta period have beautiful curly hair. Bands of graceful ornamentation of different kinds are introduced in the halo of the figure of Buddha. The Gupta artists used transparent drapery. We find freshness and vitality of art in those images.

Some of the most beautiful Siva images belong to the Gupta period. It is true that Siva was worshipped in the form of Linga in the Kushana period, but Ekamukhi and Chaturmukhi Siva-Lingas were introduced by the Gupta artists. The Gupta artists also created the Ardhanārīśvara form of Siva where the deity is represented as half male and half female.

We learn from Gupta sculptures that the worship of Vishnu in his various incarnations was very popular with the people. The image of Vishnu from Mathura is a good example of the best plastic art of the Guptas. We find in it a celestial contentment and serene spiritual contemplation. We find in Vishnu a human head with those of a boar and a lion. The images of Vishnu from Garhwal and Mathura have a central human figure surrounded by a number of radiating heads. According to Dr. Agrawala, "The great Varaha image at Udayagiri (c. 400 A.D.) has been rightly regarded as a monument to the genius of the Gupta sculptors. Its volume and powerful execution furnish a happy contrast to the scenes of lesser dimensions forming the background."

The Gupta artists handled successfully the stories of the various incarnations of Vishnu and Siva in a masterly manner. In the Deogarh temple, we find the representations of the epic stories of Rama and Krishna. We also find the legends of Krishna such as the transfer of Krishna to Gokula, his kicking the milk cart, his capturing Kans by hair, etc. We also find a scene in which Krishna, Rukmini and Sudama are shown together. We also find certain scenes from the Ramayana such as the departure of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita to the jungles, their visits to Agastya Rishi, the cutting of the nose of Surpanakha by Lakshmana, etc. According to Dr. Agrawala, "Gajendramoksha, Vishnu reclining on Ananta and Nara and Narayana in their Himalayan hermitage, sculptured in the Deogarh temple, rank among the best specimens of Hindu sculpture."

*Architecture.* The chief surviving temples of the Gupta period are the Vishnu temple at Tigawa in Jubbulpur district, Siva temple at Bhumara in the former Nagod State, Parvati temple at Nachna-Kuthara in former Ajaigarh state, Buddhist shrines at Sanchi and Bodhgaya, the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh, a temple at Dah Parbatia on the banks of the Brahmaputra in Darrang district of Assam and a temple of Siva at Khoh in former Nagod state. The beautiful Ekamukhi Linga and a mass of sculptures of Ganas from this temple are now deposited in the Allahabad museum. In addition to these, we have Gupta temples made entirely of brick from Bhitargaon in Kanpur District, Paharpur in Bengal and Sirpur in Madhya Pradesh. The temple at Bhitargaon has a pyramidal roof. Its walls are decorated with terra-cotta panels. They show scenes from Hindu mythology. According to Dr. Agrawala, this temple is important as it possesses the earliest true arch found in India.

As regards the stone temples, those are small and unimposing. Those were meant for images and there was no place for worshippers. Their roof is usually flat. The stone masonry is finely dressed. It is held together without any mortar. There are no high Sikharas and big Mandapas or halls. The Dasavatara temple at Deogarh had originally a Shikhar of about 40 feet. According to Percy Brown, the Dasavatara temple at Deogarh, when completed, was one of rare merit in the correct ordering of its parts. It is pointed out that few monuments can show such a high level of workmanship combined with ripeness and rich refinement in its sculptural effect as the Gupta temple at Deogarh. It is to be noted that the door-way leading to the sanctum was the chief centre of attraction in the Gupta temples.

As regards the Buddhist buildings, stupas, chapels and monasteries have been found at Jaulian. Charsadda and other old sites near Pushkalavati. At Mohra Maradu have been found an assembly hall, refectory, kitchen, store-room, bath-room and latrine. The excavations at Sarnath have brought to light a Buddha temple and a number of monasteries.

A stupa at Jarasindha-ka-Baithak in Rajgir and the Dhamekh stupa at Sarnath also belong to the Gupta period. The stupa at Sarnath is 128 feet high. It has four niches at four points for the images of Buddha. Narasimhagupta Baladitya built a brick temple of Buddha at Nalanda. It was 300 feet in height.

The main cave structures of the Gupta period belong to Ajanta and the Andhra country. Both Chaitya and Vihara caves were excavated at Ajanta during the Gupta period. Vihara cave Nos. XVI and XVII and the Chaitya cave No. XIX are the most important. These caves are the best artistic monuments of the Gupta period. Each cave has a large number of pillars. Their beauty is as remarkable as their variety. No two pillars are exactly alike. In spite of that, there is a general harmony of design and form. These caves have fresco paintings. The impression created by the caves can better be experienced than described. All the walls were once

covered with painted scenes from the life of Buddha and the Jatakas. The roofs and pillars have beautiful designs in bold outlines and pleasing colours.

The caves at Magulrajapuram, Undavalli and Akkannamadanna belong to the Gupta period. Their architecture is simple. Their pillars are simple but massive. The cave temple at Udyagiri near Bhupal is partly rock-cut and partly stone-built.

*Terracotta.* Terracotta formed an important branch of Gupta art. The clay modellers of the Gupta period created beautiful things and that explains their popularity with the people. The clay figures became the sculptures of the poor and this made the Gupta art popular with the common man. The terracotta figures are of three kinds, viz., gods and goddesses, male and female figures, and animal figurines and miscellaneous objects. A large number of the figures of Vishnu, Surya, Durga, Ganga, and Yamuna have been found. Some of them are almost life size. It must have been a very difficult task to bake those clay figures. We have come across a large number of figures of foreigners from Persia and Central Asia. We have figures of grooms, elephant riders, gesters and dwarfs. The terracotta figurines from Rajaghat have been compared to lyrics expressed in clay.

*Paintings.* According to Dr. V. S. Agrawala, the art of painting reached its perfection in the Gupta age. The most important examples of the Gupta paintings are to be found on the wall frescos of the Ajanta caves, the Bagh caves in Gwalior, the Sittannavasal temple in Pudukkottai and the rock-cut chambers at Sigiriya in Ceylon. Originally most of the caves at Ajanta had paintings, but now we have those paintings only in a few of them. As regards the technique of those paintings, the surface was prepared by pressing pulverised rock, cow-dung earth and chaff. The surface was levelled with a trowel. After it was dried up, the drawings in bold outlines were done by the artists.

The Gupta painters painted incidents from the life of Buddha. Griffiths, Burgess and Fergusson have praised the scene known as "Dying Princess" in cave No. XVI. Cave No. XVII has rightly been called a picture gallery. It illustrates some of the most interesting episodes concerning the birth, life and death of Buddha. The scenes of a hunt of lion and black buck and of elephants in cave No. XVII are very fine.

The paintings at Bagh in Malwa are of the same quality as those of Ajanta. There is a variety of design. There is vigour in execution. Most of these paintings are of a secular nature. There is singing and dancing with considerable freedom.

The paintings at Sigiriya in Ceylon consist of a procession of noble ladies going to a Buddhist temple. They are attended by maidservants who carry the materials of worship. The work is of a very high order.

It has been pointed out by the art critics that Gupta paintings possess delicacy of lines, brilliancy of colours and richness of



expression. It is these things that have made Gupta paintings supreme for all times.

According to Codrington, "Gupta art has been praised for its intellectuality. It would be better to treat it as the natural outcome of ancient Indian art, with its vivid appreciation of form and pattern, and its love of the quick beat and rhythm of living things and of their poise and balance in repose." Again, "The Gupta century provides a definite series of motives, which increases in number and imaginative complexity as the period of the great cave-temples draws near. It was at Ajanta, Aurangabad, and Elora that the mediaeval period began. It stands for a definite culture, but one differing considerably from the Gupta. The one is classical, the other romantic. Sir John Marshall is rightly stirred by the simplicity of the Gupta shrines. The 'refinement' and 'clear' definition, "not only of these little buildings, but also of the sculptures that adorn them, is striking and unique."

*Social and Economic Condition in Gupta Period.* In the time of the Guptas, Hindu society was divided into four castes, viz., Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. There were Ashramas through which the individuals had to pass and those were Brahmacharya, Grihasthya, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Certain duties were prescribed for the various Ashramas or stages of life. The king was the upholder of the social order. It was his duty to prevent the unlawful mixture of castes or Varnasamkara. Abhayadatta, a governor of a province, is described as the protector of castes. His successor is described as the checker of the mixture of castes or Dharmadosha.

We get a lot of information regarding the ideals and duties of the Brahmins. They stood for intellectual and spiritual life. They did not bother about worldly things. The Yogi Brahmins practised Dhyana or contemplation for the purpose of achieving Siddhi or self-fulfilment and Moksha or salvation. The Munis among the Brahmins practised extreme penance. They regarded Bhakti or devotion as their only concern in life. Brahmins were famous for their Tapa or penance, Svadhyaya or Vedic study and proficiency in Mantras, Sutras, Bhashyas and Pravachanas. There are many references in the Gupta inscriptions to the grant of land and Agraharas to Brahmins. The Brahmins were held in high esteem by all the sections of society. If saints lived at a place, that place was regarded to be sacred. Modra, a Jain nobleman, took pride in his devotion to Brahmins, religious preceptors and ascetics. Royal families had their Acharyas or preceptors among the Brahmins. It is stated that Chanala Svami was the preceptor of the royal family of Prabhavati-gupta. Brahmins were employed to offer prayers for the health and welfare of the people. The various Brahmins were known by their Gotras. There are references to many Gotras in the Gupta inscriptions, e.g., Bhardvaja Gotra, Bhargava Gotra, Atreya Gotra, Gautama Gotra, Vatsa Gotra, Kashyapa Gotra, Kanva Gotra, etc. The Brahmins were known by the Vedas to which they belonged. Some were known as Samvedi Brahmins and others as Chaturvedi



**Brahmans.** There are references to some Brahmana writers and ministers. Matrivishnu was a Brahman king. Mayura Rakshaka and Sikharaswami were Brahmans.

There is a reference to the Stridhana of women out of which they made gifts. It appears that the practice of Sati was also prevalent at that time. We are told that the wife of Goparaja, a General, burnt herself along with her husband.

We find from the Gupta literature that the girls of high families and also those living in hermitages, studied books on ancient history and legend. They were so highly educated that they could not only understand but also compose verses. The girls of high families usually got training in the arts of singing, dancing, etc. There appear to have been regular institutions for the education of girls. The Amarakosa contains words whose meaning is female teachers and female instructors of Vedic Mantras.

As regards the economic condition of the people in the Gupta period, a lot of progress was made in agriculture, industry, trade, business and banking. From the inscriptions of the Gupta period dealing with land, it is clear that it was not easy to secure any fallow, uncultivated or unsettled land for charitable purposes. The extent of intensive cultivation was so much that practically all land was brought under cultivation. The grants of land consisted of small pieces taken from different plots in different villages. Whenever land was given to educational institutions, a provision was also made for labour and bullocks which were to be required for cultivation.

It appears that there were separate guilds or Srenis or Nigamas for industry, trade and banking. There are references to guilds of Sresthis or bankers, Kulikas or artisans, Sarthavahas or traders, Tailaka Sreni or oilmen, Pattavaya Sreni or silk weavers, etc. Sometimes, many guilds were combined together into a central guild, e.g., Sresthi, Kulika, Nigama or the federated guild of bankers and craftsmen, Sresthi Sarthavaha, Kulika Nigama or the federation of bankers, traders and artisans.

Banking was an important function of the guilds. The latter accepted donations which were permanent and irrevocable. Out of this money, the guilds made payments to beneficiaries named by the donors. The documents making the deposits were duly registered. Endowments in favour of Viharas or temples were received as permanent deposits by the governing body of the guild. The temples also received permanent endowments for the purpose of making provision for daily worship, scents, incense, flowers and oil for lights in the temples.

The Gupta rulers issued currency of different designs, types and denominations. Coins were also of different metals, viz., gold, silver and copper.

Works of public utility were constructed at many places. The Sudarsana reservoir (Tataka) was constructed by damming the flow of rivers down the hill near Gamagar in Saurashtra.

In the Gandhara inscription, there is a reference to the amenities of a city such as wells, tanks, temples with halls, storage of drinking water, parks, lakes, causeways, etc.

The principal foodgrains and fruits of the Gupta period were rice, wheat, ginger, mustard, mango, melon, tamarind, plantain, cocoanut, pears, peaches, apricots, grapes, oranges, etc.

The textile industry seems to have been highly developed during that period. The clothing of the people of India was made of a variety of materials, e.g., muslin, silk, calico, linen and wool. The *Amarakosa* has many words which are meant to indicate finer or coarser kind of cloth, cloth for bed-covers, cloth for floor rugs, cloth for male and female garments, etc. The people used sewn and also uncut clothes. This information is to be found from the royal costumes on the coins of the Guptas. The Ajanta paintings have also costumes of different classes of men and women. The Pundra country produced Kshuna cloth. The best silk garments were produced at Banares. Cotton cloth of a very superior quality was manufactured at Mathura.

Ivory was used for making and adorning furniture, manufacture of seals, etc. The high degree of skill of the stone-cutters of the Gupta period is shown by the specimens of sculpture and architecture.

A reference may be made to the instruments of gold, silver, lead, copper and bronze, etc., in the *Charak Samhita*. The finest example of iron manufacture is the iron pillar of King Chandra at Mehrauli near the Kutub. The coppersmiths of India were also skilful. They built a large number of images. Both men and women put on ornaments. That points out to the prosperity of the people. There is a reference to more than 20 different kinds of jewels known at that time in the *Brihat Samhita*. There is a reference to the place of origin, quality etc. of the diamonds, pearls and rubies. Jewels were used for many purposes. Sometimes they were set in great ornaments and seals. Sometimes they were used to make the dresses more beautiful. Sometimes they decorated door-ways. There is a reference to necklaces of 80, 40, 3 and 1 strings of pearls in a list of ornaments of a householder. The work of cutting and polishing diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, etc., was also common. The art of the work in semi-precious stones was known in the Gupta period.

Ceylon enjoyed a central position for trade purposes. The ports of East and West coast of India were linked together through Ceylon. There was a regular commercial connection between Tamralipti and Ceylon on the one hand and Indonesia and Indo-China on the other.

It may be stated without any fear of contradiction that the people of the Gupta period enjoyed a high standard of living. The people in the cities particularly lived a life of luxury. The people were happy and prosperous.

*Salient Features of Gupta age.* After a survey of the Gupta period which has rightly been called the Golden Age of Indian History, we might refer to some of its salient features. It was during this period that the unification of the country was brought about. Before the rise of the Guptas, India was divided into a large number of States. Those petty States disappeared as a result of Gupta imperialism, and India came to have a united, centralised and strong government. Both foreign and indigenous states disappeared from the scene.

The Guptas were also able to set up an efficient system of administration. A uniform system of government was set up throughout the country. Both the civil and military services were re-organised. The officers began to look to the welfare of the people. Anarchy and confusion were removed. No wonder, peace, order and security were established in the country.

During the Gupta period, there was an enormous growth of trade and commerce, both internal and external. This was particularly so after the conquest and annexation of the Western satraps in the time of Chandragupta II. The growth of trade and commerce must have added to the wealth and prosperity of the country. A large number of gold coins found on the western coast of India testify to the favourable balance of trade enjoyed by India at that time.

It was during this period that India entered upon her career of cultural expansion and colonisation. Indian culture and civilisation spread to countries like Java, Sumatra, Bali, Borneo, China, etc. It was then that Greater India came into existence.

It was during this period that the study of Sanskrit made rapid progress. The patronage of the Gupta kings must have gone a long way in helping this process. Many Sanskrit works of great merit were produced during this period. Both the Brahmins and the Buddhists made their original contributions in Sanskrit.

Fine arts also made wonderful progress during this period. Dr. V. A. Smith rightly points out "the three closely allied arts of architecture, sculpture and painting attained an extraordinary high point of achievement". The Indian artists attained achievements which they had never done before.

It is contended that the Guptas were the last great Hindu Empire-builders, and the ancient traditions of imperialism gradually died out after the Gupta period. However, this point is not admitted today. Reference is made, in this connection, to the Great Empire of Harsha, the Maukharis and the Gurjar-Pratiharas.

India also witnessed the revival of Hinduism during this period. Even if it is conceded that Hinduism had begun to re-assert itself even before the rise of the Guptas, it cannot be denied that Hinduism made wonderful progress during the Gupta period. The Gupta kings strengthened the Brahmanical religion and gave it a new impetus.

The question can be asked as to what circumstances were responsible for the great achievements of the Guptas. The answer is

that it was partly due to the liberal and enlightened patronage of the Gupta rulers. It is pointed out that the Gupta kings supported all intellectual and artistic activity and showed sympathy with the tastes and requirements of the people. The establishment of perfect peace and law and order must have helped the process. It was freedom from internal danger and external aggression that gave the people the necessary atmosphere in which they could make their maximum contribution. It is pointed out that India's intercourse with foreign countries also helped in this matter. According to Dr. V. A. Smith, "The extraordinary intellectual vitality of the Gupta period undoubtedly was largely due to the constant and lively exchange of ideas with foreign lands in both East and West." The broad Indian vision of the people of this period also helped them in making progress. They were ready to learn from anybody and everybody and from anywhere. This is clear from the following statement of Varahmihir who himself was a great scientist of his period : "The Yavanas are Mlechchhas. Yet the science of astronomy originated with them and for this reason they must be revered like gods." It is rightly pointed out that the people of the Gupta period possessed a scientific spirit of enquiry. They had the desire and determination to learn critically and not to follow blindly. A specimen of that spirit is given by the following statement of Aryabhatta : "I dived deep in the ocean of astronomical theories, true and false, and rescued the precious sunken jewel of true knowledge by means of boat of my own intellect."

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## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE VAKATAKAS

According to Prof. Dubreuil, "Of all the dynasties of the Deccan that have reigned from the third to the sixth century, the most glorious, the one that must be given the place of honour, the one that has excelled all others, the one that had the greatest civilization of the whole of the Daccan, is unquestionably the illustrious dynasty of the Vakatakas." The Vakatakas were the contemporaries of the Guptas and ruled in Central India.

As regards the origin of the Vakatakas, the view of Dr. Jayaswal was that the Vakatakas originally came from a place named Vakataka which was identified by him with Bagat in the Orchha State. However, the view of Dr. Jayaswal has been challenged by Prof. Mirashi who is in favour of the southern origin of the Vakatakas. To quote Mirashi, "In support of his theory, he (Dr. Jayaswal) tried to show that some of the coins discovered at Kosam near Allahabad, another place in North India, were issued by Pravarsena I and other kings of the Vakataka dynasty. But Jayaswal's readings are all doubtful and have not been accepted by other scholars. As a matter of fact, the Vakatakas never issued any coins but used the currency of the Guptas throughout their kingdom. There is thus no valid argument to support the theory that the Vakatakas were originally a northern dynasty. On the other hand, there are several indications that they came to this province from the South. Their Sanskrit and Prakrit inscriptions contain several expressions which bear striking similarities to those used in Pallava grants. Like the Satakarnis, Kadambas and Chalukyas of the South, the early Vakatakas called themselves Haritiputras, the descendants of Hariti. They assumed the title of Dharma Maharaja which also is noticed in the records of only some southern dynasties such as the Pallavas and Kadambas. It seems certain, therefore, that the Vakatakas originally hailed from the South."

The founder of the Vakataka dynasty was Vindhyasakti who has been described in the inscriptions as Vakataka Vamsaketu. Vindhyasakti has been given a lot of praise in an inscription from Ajanta. It is stated that he increased his power by fighting great battles. He was irresistible when he was provoked. He was uncommon both in charity and in battle. He has been compared to Indra and Vishnu. He had a large cavalry with whose help he was able to defeat his enemies.

Vindhyasakti was succeeded by his son Pravarsena I. Probably he was the same person who has been mentioned in the Puranas as Pravira. If the identification is correct, Pravarsena I was a valiant

king. As Akbar is called the real founder of the Mughal empire, likewise Pravarsena I can be called the real founder of the Vakataka dynasty. He extended his territory up to the Narmada. He is said to have performed all the seven sacrifices, viz., Agnishtoma, Aptoryama, Vajapeya, Jyotishtoma, Brihaspatisava, Sadyaska and Asvamedha. It is pointed out that he performed as many as 4 horse sacrifices. That could have been possible only if he was able to lead successful expeditions in different directions. He took up the title of Samrat. Probably he shifted his capital from Chanaka to a more centrally situated place like Purika. It is possible that Pravarsena I deposed the Naga ruler of Purika and annexed his kingdom. He also entered into a matrimonial alliance with the Bharsivas. Gautamiputra, son of Pravarsena I, was married to the daughter of Bhavanaga, the Bharsiva king. The Bharsivas were a great power at that time and the matrimonial alliance with them must have added to the power and prestige of the Vakatakas. This is amply proved by the fact that the descendants of Gautamiputra took great pride in referring to this matrimonial alliance.

If the testimony of the Puranas is to be believed, Pravarsena had four sons and all of them became kings. This view was not accepted at all for a long time. However, in 1939, a copper plate was found in which it is stated that Pravarsena I had a son named Sarvasena. This name also occurs in a revised reading of the Ajanta cave inscription by Prof. Mirashi. It is possible that the empire of Pravarsena I might have been divided among his four sons. However, the oldest branch of the Vakatakas continued to rule from their capital at Purika. Sarvasena established himself at Vatsagulma in the Akola district. The names of the other two sons are still not known.

Gautamiputra, the eldest son of Pravarsena I, pre-deceased his father. Consequently, Pravarsena I was succeeded by his grandson named Rudrasena I. As he was the son of a Bharsiva lady, Rudrasena I could depend upon the support of the Bharsivas. Rudrasena I was a contemporary of Samudragupta and was probably the same person as Rudradeva named in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription. However, this view is not accepted by Prof. Mirashi. The name of Rudrasena appears in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription along with 8 other princes. There is reason to believe that Rudrasena I was the leader of the confederacy formed against Samudragupta in the Deccan. The result of his defeat at the hands of Samudragupta was that he was deprived of his Central Indian possessions and some of the territories south of the Narmada. Consequently, the main line of the Vakatakas was confined to Northern Vidarbha.

Rudrasena I was succeeded by his son Prithvisena I. The latter added to his territory by the conquest and annexation of Kuntala. Prithvisena I is described in the Allahabad Pillar Inscription as Kuntalendra. Kuntal can be identified with the Kanarese country.

Prithvisena I was succeeded by his son Rudrasena II. The latter was a contemporary of Chandragupta II. The latter sought an

alliance with Rudrasena II before starting his campaigns against the Sakas. This he did by marrying his daughter Prabhavati Gupta to Rudrasena II. Prabhavati Gupta was the daughter of Kubernaga, a Naga princess who was married to Chandragupta II. The above relations must have added to the prestige of Rudrasena II. As Rudrasena II did not rule long and was succeeded by his minor sons, Divakarsena and Damodarsena, all power fell into the hands of Prabhavati Gupta. It is remarkable to note that Prabhavati Gupta managed the affairs of the state very efficiently. After a short reign, Divakarsena was succeeded by his brother Damodarsena. The latter took up the title of Pravarsena II. There are many references to the donations of fields and villages by Pravarsena II. It is stated in a copper plate inscription that Pravarsena II founded a new city named Pravarpura. It is possible that he might have shifted his capital to the new place. Pravarsena II was a follower of Sambhu. He contended that he had established the reign of Kritayuga or Golden Age. He gave plenty of gifts to Brahmanas.

Narendrasena succeeded his father Pravarsena II. He is stated to have followed an aggressive policy. He also probably conquered some territories in the North and East. Some copper plates of his son show that Narendrasena defeated his enemies and his orders were honoured by the rulers of Kosala, Mekala and Malava. According to Prof. Mirashi, Malava had probably become independent under its viceroy, Govind Gupta. It is pointed out that the submission of Malava to Narendrasena fits in with his reign period which according to Mirashi was from 450 to 465 A.D.

Prithvisena II succeeded his father Narendrasena. He is described in one inscription as "the restorer of the broken fortune of the family." According to Prof. Mirashi, Prithvisena II changed his capital to Padmapura. He was able to subdue successfully the Nalas of the Bastar State. He was able to consolidate his position in Eastern Vidarbha. He was the last known member of the senior Branch of the Vakatakas. Thus ended the senior Branch of the Vakataka dynasty near about 480 A.D.

Before the discovery in 1939 of the Basima copper plate inscription of Vindhyasakti II, nothing was known about the Junior or Vatsagulma branch of the Vakatakas. The names of many members of this branch were mentioned in an Ajanta inscription, but those were not read properly on account of the mutilation of the record. However, those names have been restored by Prof. Mirashi in a new edition of that inscription.

Sarvasena was the founder of this Branch. He is described as a son of Pravarsena I. Probably he was a younger son and he set up a separate kingdom of his own with Vatsagulma in the Akola district as his capital. He took up the title of Dharma Maharaja. He is described as the author of the Harivijaya, a Prakrit Kavya, and some Prakrit Gathas included in the Gathasaptasati.

Vindhyasena succeeded his father Sarvasena and he took up the title of Vindhyasakti II. He also took up the title of Dharma



Maharaja. He was the author of the Basima grant made from his capital Vatsagulma in the 37th year of his reign.

Vindhyasakti was succeeded by his son Pravarsena II. However, practically nothing is known about him except the fact that he was an enlightened ruler. The latter was succeeded by a ruler whose name has been lost in the Ajanta inscription. The only thing we know about him is that he ruled well (Prashsas Samyaka). He was succeeded by his son Devasena. A copper plate inscription was issued by him from Vatsagulma. He had a very capable minister named Hastibhoja. He left the work of administration into his hands and gave himself up to pleasure.

Devasena was succeeded by his son Harishena. He is described as a valiant king. He made many conquests and was responsible for the extension of his territory in all directions. His conquests included Kosala, Kalinga, Avanti, Kuntala, Trikuta (Nasik District), Lata (Gujarat) and Andhra. He ruled over a vast territory from Malava in the North, Kuntala in the South and the Bay of Bengal in the East and the Arabian sea in the West. Varahadeva was his competent and popular minister. He was responsible for the excavation of the Ajanta cave on which the information regarding the Junior Branch of the Vakatakas was given. It appears that the Vakataka empire reached the height of its glory during the reign of this ruler.

We know nothing about this branch of the Vakatakas after the death of Harishena who ruled towards the last quarter of the 5th century A.D. It is possible that this branch was overthrown about the middle of the next century. It is difficult to point out the causes responsible for the downfall of this Branch. It is possible that it was due to the weak successors of Harishena. The rise of new powers like the Kalachuris and Kadambas and also the growth of the power of the Nalas might have contributed to their fall. The rise of Yasodharman in the second quarter of the 6th century also might have contributed to their fall. Most probably the Kalachuris were responsible for the final overthrow of the Vakataka power.

During the Vakataka period, there was a lot of activity in the fields of religion, art and literature. The Vakataka kings were staunch Hindus. Most of them were the followers of Siva under the name of Maheshwar and Maha Bhairava except Rudrasena II, son-in-law of Chandragupta II who was a worshipper of Vishnu. The Vakataka kings performed many sacrifices as laid down in the Hindu Dharma Sastras. Pravarsena is stated to have performed all the seven sacrifices. He is stated to have performed 4 Asvamedha sacrifices. The Vakataka kings gave grants of land and even villages to the pious and learned Brahmanas. They constructed many temples for the worship of Siva.

The Vakataka kings were not only the great patrons of learning but were themselves authors of repute. Sarvasena was the author of Harivijaya, a Prakrit Kavya. That book was based on the Krishna, Satyabhama and Parijata episode in the Mahabharata. That Kavya

is not available today but we have many extracts from it in the form of quotations by other authors. Even those extracts speak volumes about the excellence of the style and theme of this Kavya. In addition to this Kavya, Sarvasena was the author of a large number of the Gathas included in the Gathasaptati. Vatsagulma, his capital, became a centre of learning and culture.

Pravarsena II of the main branch of the Vakatakas was also the author of many Prakrit Gathas included in the Gathasaptati. He was also the author of Kavya Setubandha also known as Ravanavaho in Maharashtri Prakrit. According to Dandin, Setubandha was a mine of gems in the form of sayings. According to Bana, "By means of this Setu (i. e., Setubandha) the fame of Pravarsena crossed the ocean as the army of monkeys had before by means of the bridge." It is possible that Kalidas also lived in the court of Pravarsena II for some time and also wrote his Meghaduta there. The Vakatakas were also the patrons of painting, sculpture and architecture. The shrines of Tigowa and Nachna in the Vidarbha state are even now in a good state of preservation. The pillars in the verandah of Tigowa shrine have capitals of the Indo-Persepolitan style. They have half-seated lions carved back to back with a tree between them. There are also the statues of Ganga and Yamuna in that shrine. The shrine at Nachna was built in the time of Pravarsena II by a feudatory known as Vyaghradeva.

The Vihara caves XVI, XVII and Chaitya cave XIX at Ajanta belong to the Vakataka period. The Vihara cave XVI was excavated by Varahadeva, minister of Harishena. It contains a hall which is 66 ft. long, 65 ft. broad and 50 ft. high. The roof is cut in the form of beams and rafters. There is a very big statue of Buddha in the Dharma-chakra Pravartna Mudra. The picture galleries of the cave have been spoiled but the picture of the dying prince has been highly praised by Griffiths for its pathos, sentiment, artistic skill and colour. The Vihar cave XVII is also similar to cave XVI. Cave XIX has been elaborately carved with beautiful sculptures. There are the sculptures of both in sitting and standing postures. According to Fergusson, it is one of the best specimens of the Buddhist art in India.

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## CHAPTER XXIX

### HARSHA-VARDHANA AND HIS TIMES

*Sources.* Our knowledge about the reign of Harsha is "far more precise than what we possess respecting any other early Indian ruler". We are lucky in having the writings of Hiuen Tsang and Banabhatta. Those are supplemented by epigraphic and numismatic evidence.

*Hiuen Tsang.* Hiuen Tsang was a Chinese Pilgrim who visited India between 630 and 644 A.D. He is called the "Prince of Pilgrims", "Master of the Law" and "Present Sakyamuni." He was born in 600 A.D. and died in 664 A.D. He became a monk at the age of 20. At the age of 29, he decided to visit India, "the Land of the Moon." As he did not get a passport, he escaped secretly from his country. He passed through Tashkand, Samarkand and Balkh and reached Gandhara in 630 A.D. From there he went to Kashmere where he stayed for two years. He came to the Punjab and also visited important places connected with the life of Buddha such as Kapilvastu, Banares, Gaya and Kusinagar. He spent a lot of time at the Nalanda University. He was invited by king Kumara of Kamrupa and Harsha of Kanauj. He visited the Deccan and the Western Ghats. He practically travelled all over the country. In 644, he got permission from Harsha to go back to his country. A Raja named Udhita was deputed to escort him to the frontier. Hiuen Tsang reached China in 645 A.D. after passing through the Pamirs and Khotan. In spite of losses on the way, he succeeded in taking home 150 articles of Buddha's bodily relics, various images of the Buddha in gold, silver and sandal-wood and 657 distinct volumes of manuscripts. The rest of his life was devoted to the work of translations. He has left to us an account of his travels which can be seen in Buddhist Record of the Western World by Beal or "On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India" by Watters. A biography of Hiuen Tsang was written by his friend Hwui-li. This has been translated by Beal in "Life of Hiuen Tsang."

It has rightly been pointed out by Dr. R.K. Mookerjee that the account of India left to us by Hiuen Tsang "reads like a Gazetteer in the scope of its enquiry and its wealth of detail." It gives us copious information on the social, political, economic, religious and administrative aspects of the life of India during the first half of the seventh century. The importance of the information lies in the fact that this information was given by a person who stayed in India for a long period, knew the language of the country and wrote what he actually saw with his own eyes.

That is what Hiuen Tsang writes about India: "The town and villages have inner gates; the walls are wide and high; the

streets and lanes are tortuous, and the roads winding. The thoroughfares are dirty and the stalls arranged on both sides of the road with appropriate signs. Butchers, fishers, dancers, executioners, scavengers, and so on, have their abodes without the city. In coming and going, these persons are bound to keep on the left side of the road till they arrive at their homes. Their houses are surrounded by low walls, and form the suburbs. The earth being soft and muddy, the walls of the towns are mostly built of bricks or tiles. The towers on the walls are constructed of wood or bamboo; the houses have balconies and belvederes, which are made of wood, with a coating of lime or mortar, and covered with tiles. The different buildings have the same form as those in China; rushes or dry branches or tiles, or boards are used for covering them. The walls are covered with lime or mud, mixed with cow's dung for purity. At different seasons they scatter flowers about. Such are some of their different customs. The *Sangharamas* (monasteries) are constructed with extraordinary skill. A three-storeyed tower is erected at each of the four angles. The beams and the projecting heads are carved with great skill in different shapes. The doors, windows, and the low walls are painted profusely; the monks' cells are ornamental on the inside and plain on the outside. In the very middle of the building is the hall, high and wide. There are various storeyed chambers and turrets of different height and shape, without any fixed rule. The doors open towards the east; the royal throne also faces the east. Their clothing is not cut or fashioned; they mostly affect fresh white garments; they esteem little those of mixed colour or ornamented. The men wind their garment round their middle, then gather them under the armpits, and let them fall across the body, hanging to the right."

Hiuen Tsang was struck by the prosperity of India. He tells us that the people had a high standard of living. Both gold and silver coins were in circulation. Cowrie shells and pearls were also in circulation. The soil was rich and there was a lot of production. Various kinds of fruits and vegetables were grown. The staple food of the people was wheaten cakes, parched grain, sugar, ghee, and milk preparations. On certain occasions, fish, venison, and mutton were also eaten. Beef and the flesh of certain wild animals were completely forbidden. The person who violated the rules was liable to be excommunicated.

Hiuen Tsang says that many new cities had come into prominence and old ones were on the decline. Pataliputra was no longer the premier city of Northern India and its place was taken by Kanauj which was 20 li in length and about 5 or 6 li in breadth. There were hundreds of *Sangharamas* and 200 Hindu temples. The prosperity of Kanauj was expressed in its "lofty structures, beautiful gardens, tanks of clear water and the museum of rarities collected from strange lands." It was equally manifest in the refined appearance of its citizens, their clothes of silk and their devotion to learning and art. Prayaga had also become an important place. However, Sravasti was in ruins. Kapilavastu had only 30 monks. Buddhism was strong in places like Nalanda and Valabhi.



Hiuen Tsang tells us that the art of making fine cloth of silk, wool and cotton had reached perfection. He refers to various kinds of cloth manufactured at that time. The Kausiya cloth was made from silk and cotton. Ksauma or linen cloth was made of fabrics derived from the stuffs from three plants: flax, jute and hemp. The third variety of wearing material was the Kambala or blanket. The fourth class of cloth was that which was made of the wool of a wild animal which was very fine, soft and easily spun and woven.

According to Hiuen Tsang, "The ornaments of the king and grandees are very extraordinary. Garlands and tiaras of precious stones are their head ornaments and their bodies are adorned with rings, bracelets and necklaces. Wealthy mercantile people have only bracelets." If the people put on simple dress, they seem to have been fond of ornaments.

Industrial life was organized on the basis of castes and large corporations or guilds. The Brahmans did not take part in the industrial life of the country. Agriculture was in the hands of the Sudras.

Hiuen Tsang tells us that caste system dominated the Hindu society. The Brahmans performed religious duties. The Kshatriyas were the governing class. Very often the kings were Kshatriyas. The Vaishyas were traders and merchants. The Sudras did the work of agriculture and also menial work. To quote Hiuen Tsang, "The Kshatriyas and Brahmans are cleanly and wholesome in their dress, and they live in a homely and frugal way. There are rich merchants who deal in gold trinkets and so on. They mostly go bare-footed ; few wear sandals. They stain their teeth red or black ; they bind up their hair and pierce their ears. They are very particular in their personal cleanliness. All wash before eating : they never use food left over from a former meal. Wooden and stone vessels must be destroyed after use : metal ones must be well polished and rubbed. After eating they cleanse their mouth with a willow stick, and wash their hands and mouths." Again, "With respect to the ordinary people, although they are naturally light-minded, yet they are upright and honourable. In money matters they are without craft, and in administering justice they are considerate. They dread the retribution of another state of existence, and make light of the things of the present world. They are not deceitful or treacherous in their conduct and are faithful to their oaths and promises, and in their rules of government there is remarkable rectitude, while in their behaviour there is much gentleness and sweetness."

Hiuen Tsang tells us that there were no inter-caste marriages. Even marriages within the same caste were prohibited within certain degrees. There were restrictions among the various castes with regard to food and marriage but those restrictions did not stand in the way of free social intercourse among the different castes.

Hiuen Tsang observed the purity of diet among the Indians. Onions and garlic were very rarely used. The people who ate them were ostracised. There was no custom of widow re-marriage. There does not seem to have been any Purdah system at least among the

higher classes. We are told that Rajvansi did not observe Purdah while listening to the discourses of Huen Tsang. The system of Sati was known. Queen Yashodhara burnt herself after the death of her husband, Prabhakar-varadhan. Rajvansi was also going to burn herself and her life was saved with great effort.

Huen Tsang tells us that discipline was strictly in accordance with the rules of the Buddhist scriptures and breaches were severely punished. To quote him, "The pursuit of pleasure belongs to the worldly life, the pursuit of knowledge to the religious life. To return to a secular career after taking up religion is considered disgraceful. For breaking the rules of the community the transgressor is publicly rebuked; for a slight fault he is condemned to enforced silence; for a graver fault he is expelled. Those who are thus expelled for life wander about the roads finding no place of refuge; sometimes they resume their former occupation."

Learning was religious in character and the same was imparted through monasteries. Religious works were written down. However, the Vedas were handed down orally and were not transmitted to paper or leaves. The script which was used at that time was Brahmi and that was considered to have been revealed by Brahma. Sanskrit was the language of the learned people. Sanskrit grammar had been reduced to regular rules. The education of a person lasted from 9 to 30 years of age. To quote, "When the disciples are 30 years old, their minds being settled and their education finished, they go into office, and the first thing they do is to reward the kindness of their teachers." Huen Tsang tells us that there were many persons in India who spent the whole of their lives in study. He has given us a detailed account of the University of Nalanda. He also refers to the system of having big discussions on various topics.

Regarding the system of administration, Huen Tsang observes thus: "As the administration of the government is founded on benign principles, the executive is simple. The families are not entered on registers, and the people are not subjected to forced labour. The crown lands are divided into four parts. The first is for carrying out the affairs of state; the second, for paying the ministers and officers of the crown; the third, for rewarding men of genius; fourth, for giving alms to religious communities. In this way, the taxes on the people are light, and the services required of them are moderate. Every one keeps his worldly goods in peace, and all till the soil for their subsistence. Those who cultivate the royal estates pay the sixth part of their produce as tribute. The merchants who engage in commerce travel to and fro in pursuit of their calling. Rivers and toll-bars are opened for travellers on payment of a small sum. When the public works require it, labour is exacted but paid for. The payment is in strict proportion to the work done." Again, "With respect to criminals and rebels, those are few in number, and only occasionally troublesome. When the laws are broken or the power of the ruler violated, then the matter is clearly sifted and the offenders punished. There is no infliction of corporal punishment; they are simply left to live and die, and are not counted among men."

When the rules of morality or justice have been violated, or a man is dishonest or wanting in filial love, his nose or ears are cut off and he is expelled from the city to wander in jungle till he dies. For other faults besides these, a small fine is exacted in lieu of punishment. In investigating crimes, the rod is not used to extort proof of guilt. In questioning the accused, if he answers frankly, his punishment is proportioned accordingly, but if he **obstinately denies his fault**, in order to probe the truth to the bottom, trial by ordeal is resorted to."

Huen Tsang tells us that Harsha was indefatigable in the discharge of his administrative duties. He spent most of the year in making tours of inspection throughout his dominions. In this way, he set a good example to his ministers and also to kings who were his vassals. Huen Tsang also tells us that "The king made visits of inspection throughout his dominions not residing long at any place but having temporary buildings erected for his residence at each place of his sojourn." Again, "The day was too short for him. It was divided into three periods, of which one was given to affairs of government and two to religious affairs. He was indefatigable and forgot sleep and food in his devotion to good works."

Huen Tsang tells us that every transaction of the Government was recorded. The important cases of public calamity and good fortune were set forth in detail. A special Department of Records and Archives was set up by Harsha.

As regards the army, Huen Tsang tell us that Harsha maintained a huge army. The number of foot soldiers was 50,000. The cavalry consisted of one lakh of horsemen. The elephants were roughly 60,000. Chariots did not form an important branch of the army. Huen Tsang has given a detailed discussion of the equipment of the various branches of the army. He also tells us that the military guarded the frontiers and put down disturbances. The military mounted guard at night around the palace. The soldiers were promised certain salaries and were publicly enrolled.

*Bana's Harshacharita.* Another source of information for the reign of Harsha is Harshacharita of Bana. Bana was a Brahman. He was a court-poet of Harsha. Harshacharita is a history of the reign of Harsha. Its first chapter is devoted to the life and family of the author himself. The second, third and fourth chapters deal with the ancestors of Harsha and the history of the house of Thanesar. The sixth and seventh chapters deal with the wars and conquests of Harsha. The last chapter gives a description of the various religious sects living in the forests of the Vindhyas. A study of Harshacharita can help us to have a good idea of the social, religious, economic and political life of the people of India in the time of Harsha. It is true that sometimes Bana has gone to extremes while praising his master, but it cannot be denied that the book gives us a lot of useful information.

In addition to the above, there are other sources of information for the reign of Harsha. We are lucky in having many inscriptions



of Harsha's reign. Madhuban Plate Inscription, dated 631 A.D. traces the genealogy of Harsha up to four generations. The Sonpat inscription helps us in solving the chronological difficulties about the reign of Harsha. The Banskhera inscription of the year 628 A.D. gives us a facsimile of the signatures of Harsha. It shows that Harsha was an expert calligraphist.

It is contended that three dramas entitled *Ratnavali*, *Nagananda* and *Privadarshika* were written by King Harsha himself. The *Ratnavali* and *Privadarshika* deal with love and court intrigues. They have rightly been called the "comedies of Harsha". *Nagananda* refers to the charity and magnanimity of Harsha.

*Harsha's Ancestors.* The ancestors of Harsha ruled over the kingdom of Sthanisvara, modern Thanesar in Haryana. However, the origin of this kingdom is shrouded in obscurity. According to Bana, the kingdom was founded by Pushpabhuti. However, he does not mention the successors of Pushpabhuti and starts his account with Prabhakar-varadhan. Royal seals and inscriptions give us the names of many more kings, viz., Maharaj Naravardhan, Maharaj Rajya-varadhan, Maharaj Aditya-varadhan and Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Prabhakar-varadhan. Rajyavardhan was married to Yashomati Devi. He had three sons and one daughter. The names of the sons were Rajya-varadhan, Harsh-varadhan and Krishna and the name of the daughter was Rajyasri.

It is to be noted that while Naravardhan, Rajya-varadhan and Aditya-varadhan are mentioned only as Maharajas, Prabhakar-varadhan is described not only as Maharajadhiraja but also as Paramabhattaraka. We are not certain regarding the status of the three kings before Prabhakar-varadhan. These kings who flourished probably between 500 and 580 A.D., might have been the feudatory chiefs who might have acknowledged the supremacy of the Hunas or the Guptas or both at different times. It is also possible that they might have accepted the supremacy of the Maukharis.

It is true that Bana has devoted more than one chapter to Prabhakar-varadhan. However, the only information which is useful to a historian about Prabhakar-varadhan is that he was, to quote Bana, "a lion to the Huna deer, a burning fever to the king of Sindhu, a troubler of the sheep of Gurjara king, a bilious fever to that scent elephant, the Lord of Gandhara, destroyer of the skill of the Latas, and axe to the creeper which is the goddess of fortune of Malava." The way Bana has given the information, does not show whether he actually defeated the above-mentioned powers or not. However, we know that before his death, Prabhakar-varadhan had sent military expedition under his son Rajya-varadhan to Uttarapatha against the Hunas. However, we are not sure about the result of the expedition as Rajya-varadhan was called back to the capital on account of the illness of his father. It appears that the Huna kingdom was somewhere in northern Punjab but we are not sure regarding the actual relations of Harsha with the Hunas.

It is stated that Rajya-varadhan and Harshavardhan were sent in an expedition against the Hunas. However, before the Hunas



could be subdued, the news came that Prabhakar-varadhan was seriously ill. The result was that Rajya-varadhan had to run back to Thanessvara. His father had already expired and his mother had burnt herself on the bank of the Saraswati river. Rajya-varadhan was full of so much of grief that he decided to give up the throne in favour of his younger brother Harsha. Harsha also was not willing to accept the throne and ultimately Rajya-varadhan had to ascend the throne in 605 A. D. Hardly Rajya-varadhan ascended the throne when he got the news that Graha-varman, the husband of Rajyasri, the ruler of Kanauj, had been killed by Devagupta, king of Malava. He also heard the news that Rajyasri had been imprisoned. This was too much for Rajya-varadhan. Leaving his younger brother, Harsha, in the capital, Rajyavardhan at once marched against Devagupta. He took with him only 10,000 horsemen. Rajyavardhan was able to rout the Malava army with great ease but he himself was "allured to confidence by false civilities on the part of the king of Gauda and was murdered by him."

When news of the death of Rajya-varadhan came, Harsha was only 16 years of age. He was reluctant to occupy the throne. However, he was prevailed upon to do so by the councillors of the state. Thus, he became the king of Thanessara in 606 A. D.

The immediate task which confronted Harsha was to recover Rajyasri, his widowed sister. Harsha got the information that Rajyasri had escaped from the prison and entered the Vindhya forests. With the help of forest chiefs like Vyaghra-ketu, Bhukampa, and Nirghata and the ascetic teacher Divakarmitra and his disciples, Harsha was able to rescue Rajyasri who was just going to burn herself by throwing herself into the fire.

*Military campaigns of Harsha.* Harsha was a great warrior and a conqueror and no wonder he fought against many powers. However, it is unfortunate that we do not possess much definite data about the same and there is a lot of controversy among scholars about them.

*Sasanka.* Sasanka, the king of Bengal or Gauda, was a contemporary of Harsha. He was an ally of Devagupta, the ruler of Eastern Malava, when the latter attacked and destroyed the power of Graha-varman of Kanauj. When Devagupta was defeated by Rajya-varadhan, the latter was invited by Sasanka to his quarters and killed there. No wonder, Sasanka was the target of Harsha. It is stated in Bana's Harshacharita that the Digvijaya of Harsha started with elaborate preparations for war against the Gauda king who is described as "the vilest of Gaudas" and "the vile Gauda serpent". However, Bana does not give us any detail of the war between Harsha and Sasanka. Even the account of Hiuen Tsang is not helpful in this matter. He merely tells us that Sasanka was a persecutor of Buddhism. He destroyed the Buddhist monasteries between Kushinagar and Varanasi. He threw the stones of Pataliputra showing the Buddhist footprints into the Ganges. He cut down the Bodhi tree at Gaya. He replaced the image of the Buddha by that of Siva.

Hsien Tsang tells us that Sasanka was just dead when he visited the Bodhi tree in about 637 A. D.

*Kamrupa.* It cannot be said definitely whether Harsha ever got possession of that part of Bengal which lay to the east of Bhagathi or north of the Padma river. However, it is definite that Bhaskar-varman, king of Kamrupa, was for some time, master of this territory. It is possible that he was given this territory by Harsha as a reward for his services to him in his war against Sasanka. It is also possible that for some time Harsha was the suzerain of Bengal and Bhaskar-varman got possession of this territory after the death of Harsha.

*War with Pulakesin II.* A lot of importance has been attached to the war between Harsha and Pulakesin II. Hsien Tsang tells us that Harsha himself marched at the head of his troops to fight against Pulakesin II. Before starting the march, he gathered troops from the five Indies and summoned the best leaders from all countries. However, he was unable to defeat Pulakesin II. The successors of Pulakesin II regarded the victory against Harsha as an event of great importance and took special pride in it. It was claimed that Pulakesin II acquired the title of Parmeshwar "by defeating Harshavardhana, the war-like lord of all the regions of the north".

The view of Dr. V. A. Smith was that Pulakesin II "guarded the passes on the Narmada so effectually that Harsha was constrained to retire discomfited, and to accept that river as his frontier." However, Dr. R. C. Majumdar points out that the Latas, Malavas, and Gurjaras are referred to as the feudatories of Pulakesin II and there is no evidence that they ever submitted to Harsha. Hsien Tsang also refers to independent kingdoms in Malava and Bundelkhand. Dr. Majumdar comes to the conclusion that the Empire of Harsha did not extend up to the Narmada in the South and it is likely that the actual battle between Harsha and Pulakesin II was fought much further to the north of the Narmada.

*Valabhi.* As regards Valabhi, Siladitya I, Kharagraha, Dharsena III, Dhruvasena II, Baladitya and Dharsena IV were the contemporaries of Harsha. It appears that there was a war between Harsha and the king of Valabhi. We do not know the circumstances which led to war and also the events of that war. Dr. R. C. Majumdar suggests that Harsha at first gained some success against the king of Valabhi but the situation was saved on account of the help given to the king of Valabhi by Dadda II and probably other allies. Dr. Majumdar rejects the view that Valabhi was ever conquered by Harsha and its ruler became his subordinate vassal. Dadda II of Broach incurred the hostility of Harsha by taking up the cause of the ruler of Valabhi.

*Sindh.* Bana refers to Harsha as having "pounded the king of Sindhu and appropriated his fortune." It is well-known that Sindhu was hostile to Prabhakar-vardhana and it is possible that Harsha might have led a campaign against it. However, the account of Hsien Tsang shows that Sindh was a strong and independent kingdom

when he visited it. This proves that Harsha was not successful against Sindh.

*Nepal and Kashmir.* The States of Nepal and Kashmir were probably outside the empire of Harsha. Scholars like Bhagavan Lal Indraji and Buhler are of the opinion that the conquests of Harsha extended to Nepal. The basis of their contention is that the era of Harsha was in use there. Dr. R. K. Mookerji seems to identify Nepal or Kashmir with the inaccessible land of snowy mountains. His inclination to accept Kashmir as a dependency of Harsha is proved by his references to the writings of Hiuen Tsang relating to Kashmir.

Dr. Sylvain Levi differs from the views of Bhagavan Lal Indraji and Buhler. His contention is that "Nepal at the time was a dependency of Tibet, which after Harsha's death, helped Nepal in supporting the Chinese envoy Wang-hiuen-tse in his expedition against the usurper of Harsha's throne." He also contends that the use of the Harsha era does not necessarily mean that Nepal was a dependency of Harsha.

*Orissa.* As regards Orissa, there is evidence to show that it became a part of Harsha's empire by conquest. We are told that Harsha led an expedition to Kongoda or Ganjam and also fixed his camps in Orissa. After its conquest, a Mahayan Conference was held in Orissa and Buddhist scholars from Nalanda were invited to it. It was after the Conference that Harsha offered to Jayasena, the Buddhist scholar, the "revenues of eighty large towns of Orissa."

*Extent of his Empire.* The difficulty of determining the exact extent of the empire of Harsha lies in the fact that very extravagant estimates have been made by many scholars on insufficient data. According to Hiuen Tsang, Harsha reduced the neighbouring states to subjection, invaded the states which had refused allegiance and ultimately brought the Five Indies of Saurashtra, Kanya Kubja, Gauda, Mithila and Orissa under allegiance. Countries far and near also gave allegiance to him. South Indian inscriptions tell us that Harsha was the supreme sovereign of Uttarapatha or Northern India (*Sakalottarapathanatha*). The view of Dr. R. C. Majumdar is that "At first Harsha's kingdom comprised merely the territories of the old states of Thaneshwar and Kanauj, though he probably added some small principalities to the north and west. It may be said to have comprised the Eastern Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. Towards the close of his reign, he had annexed Magadha and even pushed his conquests as far as Orissa and Kongoda. It is not definitely known, however, whether the last two with the intervening territory were ever incorporated in his dominions." Dr. Majumdar does not accept the view of Dr. Smith that the king of Valabhi was a feudatory or vassal of Harsha. He also rejects Smith's view that Malava, Gujarat, Kutch and Kathiawar Peninsula were within the limits of Harsha's empire.

*Relations with China.* Harsha seems to have been impressed by the power and prestige of the Chinese Emperor from what he was told about him by Hiuen Tsang. In 641 A.D., Harsha sent a



Brahman envoy to the Chinese Court. In 643 A.D., a Chinese mission came along with the reply.

In 643 A.D., the second Chinese mission came to India under Li-y-pao and Wang-hiuen-tse. This mission brought the reply of the Chinese emperor and its members were received with great respect and honour. Wang hiuen-tse was sent back to India immediately after his arrival in China. This mission was probably sent after the receipt of the letter which Harsha had sent through Hieun Tsang. Wang-hiuen-tse left for India in 644 A.D. along with Tsang-Cheu-genn. Unfortunately, Harsha was dead before the arrival of the third Chinese mission.

*Harsha's Religion.* The members of the royal family to which Harsha belonged acted freely on their individual preferences in the matter of their religion. Prabhakar-varadhan was a devotee of the Sun. It is stated that he offered every day to the Sun "a bunch of red lotuses set in a pure vessel of ruby and tinged, like his own heart, with the same hue." Raja-varadhan was a Buddhist. Harsha himself distributed his devotions among three deities of the family, viz., Siva, Surya and Buddha. He is stated to have erected costly temples for the service of all three. However, in his later days, he began to favour the Mahayana form of Buddhism. This was obviously the result of the influence exercised on him by Hieun Tsang.

*Kanauj Assembly.* In 643 A.D., Harsha summoned an assembly at Kanauj. The object of the Assembly was to take advantage of the presence of Hieun Tsang to spread the teachings of Buddha in the country. A large number of kings attended the Assembly. There were 3,000 Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhist monks, 3,000 Brahmans and Nigrodhas and about 1,000 Buddhist scholars from the Nalanda University. Harsha proposed Hieun Tsang to the chair and prescribed for discussion a topic on Mahayanism. This meeting lasted for 23 days and was a one-sided preaching of Mahayanism.

We are told that a great monastery and shrine was specially erected upon the banks of the Ganges on that occasion. A golden image of Buddha, equal to the king in stature, was kept in a tower, 100 feet high. A similar but smaller image, 3 feet in height, was carried everyday in a procession which was joined by 20 Rajas and 300 elephants. The canopy was carried by Harsha himself who appeared as god Sakra. Raja Kumara of Kamarupa was dressed as god Brahma and he waved a white fly-whisk. As Harsha moved along, he scattered on every side pearls, golden flowers and other precious things. Harsha washed the image of Buddha at the altar with his own hands and carried it on his shoulders to the western tower. There he offered to it thousands of silken robes, embroidered with gems.

*Prayaga Assembly.* In the same year, Harsha arranged another Assembly (Moksha-Parishad) at Prayaga. Harsha explained that he had been holding such Assemblies for the past 30 years. The Assembly of 643 A.D. was the 6th one. The assembly was held



on the sands where the rivers Ganga and Yamuna meet. It was attended by the 18 royal companions of Harsha and Hiuen Tsang. There were more than half a million people present on the occasion. Arrangements were made for the accommodation and feeding of those persons.

As regards the proceedings at Prayaga, on the first day, an image of Buddha was set up in one of the temporary buildings upon the sands and large number of clothes and valuable articles were distributed among the people. On the second and third days respectively, the images of Surya and Siva were honoured. However, the amount of distribution of charity was only half of what it was on the first day. On the 4th day, gifts were given to ten thousand Buddhist monks. Each monk received 100 gold coins, a pearl and a cotton garment. They were also given food, drink, flowers and perfumes. During the next 20 days, Brahmans were given gifts. The Jains and the followers of other religions received gifts and presents for ten days. Alms were given to mendicants from distant regions during the next ten days. During the next one month, help was given to the poor, orphans and the destitutes. All this lasted for 75 days. According to Hiuen Tsang, "By this time the accumulation of five years was exhausted. Except the horses, elephants, and military accoutrements, which were necessary for maintaining order and protecting the royal estate, nothing remained. Besides these the king freely gave away his gems and goods, his clothing and necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets, chaplets, neck-jewel and bright head-jewel, all these he freely gave without stint. All being given away, he begged from his sister (Rajyasri) an ordinary second-hand garment, and having put it on, he paid worship to the "Buddhas of the ten regions", and rejoiced that his treasure had been bestowed in the field of religious merit."

*Coins and Seals.* Sir Richard Burn was responsible for finding out silver coins out of which nine were those of Sri Pratapasila, 284 of Sri Siladat or Siladitya and one of Harsha. Dr. Hoernle has found a gold coin which is attributed to Harsha. It has on it the legend Harsha-deva with figure of a Horseman. Harsha is called Harsha-deva not only in inscriptions but also in Bana's Harshacharita.

We have also come across two seals of Harsha. The Sonpat Copper seal has the figure of a bull at the top. The Nalanda Seal has a mutilated inscription in which Harsha is described as Maharaja-dhiraja.

*Author and Patron of Learning.* Harsha was not only a conqueror and administrator but also a man of learning. Bana has paid a tribute to Harsha on account of his poetical skill, originality and wide learning. Itsing tells us that Harsha was a man of letters. Harsha was responsible for calling poetical compositions by literary men of his court. As many as 500 poems dealing with the previous lives of Buddha were presented to the king and came to be known as *Jatakamala*. Itsing tells us that Harsha put in verse the story of the Bodhisattva Jimuta-vahana. Harsha is also credited with the authorship of *Ratnavali*, *Priyadarsika* and *Nagananda*. Jayadeva tells us in

his *Gitagovindam* that Harsha was as great a poet as Kalidasa and Bhasa.

Harsha had a large number of scholars in his court. Bana was the chief among them and he wrote *Harshacharita* and *Kadambari*. Haridatta was also patronised by Harsha. Jayasena was famous for his learning in various subjects and Harsha offered to him the revenues of eighty villages in Orissa. However, the offer was declined by Jayasena.

*Administration.* King Harsha was the pivot of administration. He was of the opinion that the king must constantly exert himself in order to keep administrative efficiency. Huen Tsang tells us that Harsha was indefatigable. The day was too short for him. He divided his day into three parts of which one was devoted to the affairs of the State. He had a dynamic personality. He was so busy that it was difficult for people and even for kings to obtain interviews with him.

Harsha believed in the utility of inspection tours. If there was any irregularity in the manners of the people of the cities, he went amongst them. However, his inspection tours were not confined to the urban areas alone. Even rural areas received equal attention. The king suspended his inspection work during the rainy season on account of the difficulties of weather and communications. In fair weather, he visited as many places as possible. He got prepared temporary buildings for his stay while on tour. When the king halted at any place, the people could interview him and put before him their grievances.

A lot of pomp and show was associated with the king. When the king was on the march, he was accompanied by several hundred drummers who beat a note on golden drums for each step taken. No other king was allowed to use such "music-pace drums". The royal Chamberlain regulated the audience to the king.

It is true that theoretically the Government of Harsha was an autocracy. However, a large amount of self-government was allowed to the people in their respective spheres. Most of the work was left in the hands of the village communities. There was considerable co-operation between the Central Government and the popular bodies of the villagers.

*Council of Ministers.* The king was assisted by a council of Ministers. The Council exerted itself whenever there was a vacancy to the throne. The Council had a say not only in the choice of the king, but also influenced foreign policy. It is contended that it was on the advice of the Council of Ministers that Rajya-vardhana took the fatal step of accepting the invitation of the enemy and was killed there.

*Secretariat.* There seems to have been a well-organized Secretariat at the capital. Bana refers to Avanti as Minister for Foreign Relations and War. He describes Simhanada as the Commander-in-Chief of Harsha. Kuntala is described by him as Chief cavalry officer. Skandagupta is mentioned as the chief commandant of the

elephant force. In the Madhuvana Copper Plate, Skandagupta is described as Mahapramatara Mahasamanta. In the same plate the name of Samanta Maharaja Isvaragupta is given as Keeper of Records. Bhanu is described as the Keeper of Records in the Banskhera copper plate inscription. The names of the chief officers of the state were Mahasamanta, Maharaja, Daussagmasadhanika, Parmatara, Rajasthaniya, Kumaramatya, Uparika, Vishayapati, etc.

It is pointed out that the superior civil service was manned by Kumaramatyas. It is from them that ministers, Secretariat officers and district officers were taken. The centre had its own inspecting officers. It had its own royal messengers who are described as Dirghadhvagas in Harshacharita. There is also a reference to an officer called Sarvagatah who was probably a member of the secret service department. It appears that most of the senior officers were not paid in cash, it appears that the Government servants of the lower grade were paid in cash or in land according to their work.

*Army.* According to Huen Tsang, Harsha had 5,000 elephants, 2,000 cavalry and 5,000 foot soldiers. After enlarging his territory, Harsha increased his forces. Then he came to have 60,000 elephants, and 1,00,000 cavalry. The horses for the cavalry were recruited from Sindh, Persia, and Kamboja. The infantry must have been several lakhs strong although its exact strength is not given. Ordinary soldiers were called Chatas and Bhatas. Cavalry officers were known as Brihadasvavara. Infantry officers were known as Baladhikritas and Mahabaladhikritas. The Commander-in-Chief was known as Mahasenapati.

*Division of Empire.* The kingdom of Harsha was divided into provinces, divisions, districts etc. We do not have any information regarding the number of provinces under Harsha. Bana refers to various Lokapalas in Harshacharita. It appears that provinces were divided into *Bhuktis*. *Bhukti* was divided into many *Vishayas*. They probably corresponded to the modern district. In each *Vishaya*, there were many *Pathakas*. It is not clear whether any smaller division intervened between a *Pathak* and a village. However, the administration of the village was in the hands of a headman called *Gramakshapatalika*. The latter was assisted by a number of clerks known as *Karanikas*. There is no reference to the village councils but there is every possibility that such a thing did exist.

*Taxes.* There are references to three kinds of taxes viz., *Bhaga*, *Hiranya* and *Bali*. *Bhaga* was the land tax which was paid in kind. *Hiranya* refers to those taxes which were paid in cash whether by farmers or by merchants. It is difficult to say which particular taxes were implied by the term *Bali*. It appears that ferry tax was in vogue. Taxes on merchandise were governed by the weights and measures. The share of the king from agricultural produce was one-sixth. There was forced labour but was paid for. Huen Tsang tells us that taxation was very light.



*Penal System.* Hiuen Tsang also tells us that there were very few criminals and rebels. When the laws were broken the offenders were punished. There was no infliction of corporal punishment. The criminals were simply left to live and die and were not counted among men. For certain offences, the nose or ears of the offender were cut off and he was turned out from the city to live in jungles for the rest of his life. For some offences, a small fine was imposed. No force was used to extort confession from the offender. There was also the system of trial by ordeal.

Hiuen Tsang tells us that the government was generous and officials' requirements were few. The government did not interfere with the lives of the people. The people were also not required to get themselves registered. According to Dr. Altekar, the administration of Harsha was not so efficient as in the time of the Maurvas or the Guptas. It is true that Hiuen Tsang has paid a tribute to the efficiency of administration of Harsha, but the Chinese traveller was not justified in making a general statement. Hiuen Tsang himself was captured by robbers not far from the capital. It was only through sheer luck that his life was saved. On the whole we might say that administration under Harsha was neither as efficient as Gupta administration nor as many-sided in its activities as the Mauryan one.

*Estimate of Harsha.* Harsha was a great conqueror and this is proved by the vast territory brought by him under his control. He was himself a learned man and also patronised the learned people. References have already been made to the persons patronised by him.

Harsha was an ideal ruler. Hiuen Tsang tells us that "he was indefatigable and forgot sleep and food in his devotion to good works." Harsha devoted all his time to promote the welfare of his people. While doing so, the day was too short for him. Harsha had no equal in generosity and charity. It has been pointed out that he gave away everything in charity at the Prayaga Assembly. Harsha has been called Indian Hatim on account of his generosity.

According to Panikkar, "Harsha has often been compared to Asoka; but there is no similarity between them except of the most superficial kind. The only point of comparison is perhaps that they were both patrons of Buddhism. But even here there is no similarity between the religious fervour and the missionary enthusiasm of Piyadasi and the latitudinarian eclecticism of Harsha. Asoka, after his conversion to the faith of the Buddha, spent his whole life for the propagation of the noble Dharma without in any way interfering with the beliefs of those who professed other forms of religion. For this purpose he worked day and night. Harsha, on the other hand, does not seem to have taken anything more than a dilettante's interest in the religious discussion of his court and never seriously set himself, except perhaps by liberal donations, to support the religion that he professed. A more suitable parallel than that of Asoka is Akbar.



Like the great Mogul Emperor, Harsha extended toleration to all, held religious discussions with the leading doctors of all creeds and was, like him, perfectly indifferent to the higher call of religion. Like the famous discussion in the Ibadat Khana, the disputations in Harsha's court never led to any result. Like Akbar, again, Harsha was a military monarch for the greater part of his reign. In spite of obvious shortcomings, Harsha was without doubt an enlightened monarch and deserves to be considered among India's greatest rulers." Again, "It is Harsha's glory to have been the last in the long line of Hindu rulers beginning with Chandragupta Maurya in whose time India appeared to the world not only as an ancient and mighty civilisation, but also an organised and powerful State working for the progress of humanity. There is no doubt that Harsha, the ruler, the poet, and the religious enthusiast will ever have an honoured place in Indian history."

According to Dr. R.C. Majumdar, "It would be quite wrong to assume, as many have done, that Harsha was the last great empire-builder in the Hindu period and his death marked the end of all successful attempts to restore the political unity of Northern India. Several empires, which did not compare unfavourably with his, rose and fell in Northern India during the next five centuries, and some of them, like the Pratihara empire, were not only bigger but also more enduring. While, therefore, it would be idle to pretend that Harsha-vardhana's reign constitutes a distinctive age or marks an epoch in Indian history in any way, we cannot withhold tribute of praise and admiration which is due to him as a great ruler, a brave military leader, a patron of arts and a man of noble impulses and distinguished personality."

*The Nalanda University.* The Nalanda University was the Oxford of Mahayanism and a rival of Kashi. What Cluny and Clairvaux were to France in the Middle Ages, Nalanda was to India. It was founded in the 5th century A.D. by one of the later Gupta emperors. It was endowed by monarchs and rich men from all parts of India and the Hindu colonies overseas. In course of time it became a truly international centre of learning. We are lucky in having a lot of information about this Buddhist University not only from the account of Hiuen Tsang and Itsing but also from inscriptions and archaeology.

The University of Nalanda had imposing buildings. There were at least 8 colleges built by different patrons including one by Balaputradeva, King of Srivijaya or Sumatra. The colleges were built in rows. The stone inscription of Yasuvarmadeva from Nalanda praises the grandeur of the buildings. Hiuen Tsang tells us that the whole of the university area was enclosed by a brick wall. "One gate opens into the great college from which are separated eight other halls standing in the middle. The richly adorned towers and fairy-like turrets like the pointed hill tops are congregated together. The observatory seems to be lost (in mist) and the upper rooms tower

above the sky ...All the outside courts in which are the priests' chambers are of four stages . The stages have dragon projections and coloured caves, pearl-red pillars carved and ornamented, richly adorned balustrades, and roofs covered with tiles that reflect the light in a thousand shades."

The Nalanda University had not only a magnificent building, but all other kinds of facilities were also provided to students for their studies. We are told that there were three great libraries called Ratnasagara (Sea of Gems), Ratnodadhi (Ocean of Gems) and Ratnaranjak (Collection of Gems). There were more than 10,000 students including teachers of all kinds. They came from Korea, Mongolia, Japan, China, Tibet, Ceylon, Tukhara, Greater India and various parts of India. As a matter of fact, they came from all parts of the Buddhist world.

Not only persons came to Nalanda from outside, the Nalanda scholars went to various parts of the world and were responsible for the spread of Buddhism. Those Nalanda scholars who worked in Tibet were Santarakshita, Padma-sambhava, Kamalasila, Sthiramati and Buddhakirti. The names of those who worked in China were Kumarajiva, Paramartha Subhakara Simha and Dharma-deva.

The Nalanda University was primarily a Buddhist Vihara. It was established with a view to propagate the teachings of Buddha. In that capacity, it helped thousands of Buddhist monks to study Buddhism day and night. To those persons, Nalanda was the temple of God. However, the Nalanda University outgrew the limits of a mere Vihara of Buddhist learning. In course of time, subjects in addition to Buddhism also came to be taught. We are told that the subjects of study at Nalanda University were all the four Vedas, Hetu Vidya or logic, Sabda Vidya or Grammar, Chikitsa Vidya or medicine, Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya and the Buddhist works of the different schools. The names of some of the most famous teachers of the Nalanda University were Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Anga, Siabhadra, Vasubandu, Dinnaga, Dharmapala, Chandrapala, Prabhamitra, Jinamitra, Jnananchandra etc. Life at Nalanda was lived at high pressure. Learning and discussing they found the day too short ; day and night they admonished each other, juniors and seniors mutually helping to perfection.

The Nalanda University stood for the ideal of freedom in learning. It welcomed knowledge from all quarters, from all sects and creeds. It was a genuine university and not a mere sectarian and denominational school.

The teachers and students at Nalanda University were the exponents and followers of different sects or schools of thought. They were always meeting in debates and discussions. Hiuen Tsang refers to a few cases of such discussions.

Nalanda University was not an ordinary university. It was a post-graduate institution to which admission was very difficult. Before admission, an examination was held in which hardly 20% students passed and the rest of 80% were rejected. Only the most

brilliant were admitted to the University. Hsuen Tsang tells us that people came to this University to perfect their knowledge. After acquiring that knowledge, they went to the various parts of the world. To quote Hsuen Tsang, "Learned men from different cities who desire quickly to acquire a renown in discussion come here in multitudes."

A lot of property was donated to the Nalanda University for its maintenance. The University had its own paddy fields and agricultural and dairy farms for the supply of rice and milk. Hsuen Tsang tells us that he saw every day cart-loads of "several hundred peculs of ordinary rice and several hundred cotties in weight of butter and milk" coming from its agricultural and dairy farms.

The Nalanda University functioned as a corporate body and the same was the case with the affiliated colleges of Viharas. We have come across many seals from Nalanda. It appears that the seal of the Nalanda University carried with it great prestige and authority.

The University of Nalanda continued to flourish for five centuries even after the visit of Itsing. The history of the end of the Nalanda University is in a way the history of the extinction of Buddhism from India.

**Itsing's Account of India.** Itsing was a Chinese traveller who visited India between 672 and 688 A.D. He has left to us a lot of information regarding the social, religious and economic life of the people of India of his times. In addition to that, he gives us information regarding the life of Buddha, the places associated with his name and the way he preached to the people. He tells us that Buddha preached to the lay followers in a very simple language. Buddha believed that most of the sins of the people of the world could be removed by the regulation of Sheela or morality.

Itsing tells us that the people of India and also of further India had knowledge of the four Nikayas although the number of the worshippers varied from place to place. Even where Buddhism flourished, other religions existed side by side.

In India, the priests washed their hands and feet before their meals. They sat on separate small chairs made of cane. It was customary in India to distinguish between clean and unclean food. Even if a mouthful of food was taken, it became unclean and the utensils in which food was put were not to be used again. This was the custom not only among the rich but also among the poor. Every Indian was required to clean his mouth after his meals. Itsing tells us that once upon a time when the Mongolians of the North sent a mission to India, the messengers were despised and ridiculed as they did not clean their bodies and their mouths.

Whenever a corn-field was cultivated by the Samgha, a share of the produce had to be given to the monastic servants or those who had done the tilling. Every product was to be divided into 6 parts and the Samgha was to be given one-sixth of it.

All that was done in a monastery was done through the assent of the Assembly and nothing could be done except through it. If any priest denied anything all alone or treated the other priests favourably or unfavourably at his own pleasure without taking into consideration the will of the Assembly, he was expelled from the monastery.

Itsing tells us that the rules of the monastery of Nalanda were very strict. The number of residents was more than 3,000. The land in its possession contained more than 200 villages which had been bestowed upon it by kings of many generations.

Itsing tells us that throughout India people put on two clothes. Those were of wide lines 8 ft long. Those were not cut or sewn. Those were simply put around the waist to cover the lower part. The people of the North-West used no cloth. They put on clothes of skin and wool. They used shirts and trousers. Itsing refers to another type of garment which was put over the left shoulder. The skirt worn in India was put cross-wise around the lower part of the body. White soft cloth was used for that purpose.

According to Itsing, both priests and laymen in India were in the habit of taking walks. The walking hours were in the forenoon and afternoon. According to Itsing, walking cures diseases and helps to digest food.

Itsing tells that India was known as Aryadesa. The term 'Arya' means noble and the term 'desa' means region. India was called Aryadesa because men of noble character appeared there successively. India was also called Madhyadesa because it was the centre of hundreds of countries. The people were all familiar with this name. The northern tribes alone called Aryadesa as Hind but that was not at all a common name. It was only a vernacular name and had no special significance. The people of India did not often know this designation and the most suitable name for India was **Aryadesa or noble land.**

Itsing has given us a detailed description of the manner in which education was imparted in India by teachers to students. The students went to the teacher and served him. The teacher gave lessons in such way that he did not pass over any fact without giving its full explanation. The teacher supervised the conduct of his pupil and warned him of his defects. Whenever the teacher found his student at fault, he made him seek remedies and repent for the same. The student was required to rub the body of the teacher, fold his clothes and sometimes sweep the apartments and the yard. The pupil was required to give pure water to the teacher. The student did everything on behalf of his teacher. On the other hand, if a pupil became unwell, it was the duty of the teacher to attend upon him, and give him all the medicines required and treat him as if he was his own child.

Itsing tells us that according to the medical science in India, a physician examined voice and face of the diseased and prescribed for him according to the eight sections of the medical science. Those sections dealt with all kinds of sores, diseases of the body, diseases of



children, means of lengthening one's own life and the methods of invigorating the legs and body. The eight parts existed in separate books but very recently were summarised into one. All the physicians practised according to that book and did successful business. The Indians honoured physicians as they gave relief to the people. Itsing tells us that in the country of Latas in Western India those who were taken ill, abstained from food, sometimes for half a month and sometimes for full month. They did not eat at all so long as the illness persisted. In Central India, the longest period of fasting was a week, but in the case of the Islands of Southern sea, there was a limit of two or three days.

According to Itsing, the people of India did not eat any kind of onions. Those who carried away the filth had to distinguish themselves by striking sticks while going about. If a person was touched by them by mistake, he was required to wash himself thoroughly and also change his clothes.

Itsing tells us that Asvaghosh wrote some poetical songs and Sutralankar Sastra. He also composed the Buddha Charita Kavya. This took 6 months to finish. The Sutras were found in the work of Panini. Children began to learn those Sutras when they were only 8 and they could repeat them from memory within a period of 8 months. They mastered them thoroughly.

The Kasikavritti was a commentary on the Sutras. Boys of 15 started learning it and it took them 5 years to understand the same. The book was written by Gayaditya who was a scholar of great repute.

According to Itsing, when the students finished the commentary, they had to learn composition in prose and verse, logic, metaphysics, etc.

Itsing refers to the Bhartrihari Sastra. It contained 25,000 Shalokas. The book dealt with the principles of human life, rules of grammar and the rule relating to the circumstances leading to the rise and decline of families. Itsing tells us that Bhartrihari was very famous throughout India. His books were known everywhere. Bhartrihari was a contemporary of Dharampala. There were other works attributed to him.

The information given by Itsing is very useful in having a clear picture of Indian society at the time of his visit to India.

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
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## CHAPTER XXX

### NORTHERN INDIA AFTER HARSHA

It is not within the scope of this book to give a detailed account of the history of Northern India or Southern India after the death of Harsha in 647 A.D. All that is intended to be done is merely to discuss the important events.

It is well known that the political unity of Northern India achieved under Harsha was broken after his death. Arjuna usurped the throne of Kanauj and he opposed the Chinese mission under Wang-hiuen-tse which arrived after the death of Harsha. The members of the escort accompanying Wang-Hiuen-tse were either massacred or taken prisoners. Wang-Hiuen-tse and his colleagues managed to escape to Nepal by night. Srong-tsan Gampo was at that time the ruler of Tibet. He was married to a Chinese princess. He gave 1200 picked soldiers to Wang-hiuen-tse who was also able to get 7000 horse-men from Nepal. King Bhaskara-varman of Kamarupa also helped Wang-hiuen-tse. Wang-hiuen-tse was able to storm the chief city of Tirhut. 3000 of the garrison were beheaded and 10,000 persons were drowned in the river. Arjuna was defeated and taken prisoner. Wang-hiuen-tse beheaded a thousand prisoners and also captured the entire royal family. He took 12,000 prisoners and obtained more than 13,000 heads of horses and cattle. 580 walled towns made their submission during the course of the campaign. Wang-hiuen-tse carried Arjuna as a captive to China.

It was in this atmosphere that a large number of states came into existence in Northern India and no wonder there was a struggle for supremacy among them. Four states took part in the struggle and those were Kanauj, Kashmir, Magadha and the Rashtrakutas. For some time, the Pratiharas of Kanauj became supreme. Later on, their place was taken by the Pala kings. The Rashtrakutas held sway towards the west and south of the Deccan. After the passing away of the Palas, Northern India was divided among the Chalukyas of Anhilwada, Chandellas of Jejakabhukti, Kachchhapaghapas of Gwalior, Chedis of Dahala, Paramaras of Malva, Guhilas of Southern Rajputana and Chahamanas of Sakambhari.

*Kamarupa.* The kingdom of Kamarupa acknowledged the overlordship of the Gupta king but retained its autonomy in internal affairs. Bhaskar-varman was the ruler of Kamarupa in the time of Harsha. As he was afraid of the rising power of Sasanka, the king of Gauda or Bengal, he entered into a friendly alliance with Harsha and also gave him substantial help in his eastern campaign. As his share of the spoils of war, he received a part of Bengal. After the death of Sasanka, Bhaskar-varman came to be looked upon as a feudatory vassal. This is proved by the fact that when Bhaskar-

varman refused to send Hiuen Tsang to Harsha, the latter threatened him and ultimately Bhaskar-varman had to send Hiuen Tsang to Harsha. It is also known that king Bhaskar-varman attended the assemblies of Harsha at Kanauj and Prayaga. It was after the death of Harsha that Bhaskar-varman asserted his independence. However, it appears that his independence did not last long. Bhaskar-varman was defeated by Silastambha, a barbarian and it was under these circumstances that Kamarupa passed under the rule of the Mlechhas for nearly 300 years.

*Kashmir.* The valley of Kashmir was politically isolated from India except during the rule of the Mauryas and Kushanas. During the reign of Asoka, Buddhism spread in Kashmir. Kanishka also had Kashmir as a part of his empire and he also held the Buddhist Council in Kashmir. The Huna leader, Mihirgula, took refuge in Kashmir. However, he put to death the ruler of Kashmir and usurped his throne. But he did not live long and he died after a year. In the 7th century, a powerful Hindu dynasty rose in Kashmir. It was founded by Durlabhavardhana. It was during the reign of this ruler that Hiuen Tsang visited Kashmir. Durlabhavardhana was succeeded by his son Pratapaditya. It was he who built the town of Pratappura. However, Lalitaditya Muktapida who ascended the throne about 724 A.D. was the greatest ruler of the dynasty. He is stated to have conquered the Punjab, Kanauj, Dardistan and Kabul. It was during his reign that the Martand temple dedicated to the Sun god was built. Yasovarman, the king of Kanauj, was defeated by him about the year 740 A.D. He died about the year 760 A.D. after a reign of 36 years. Jayapida or Vinayaditya, the grandson of Lalitaditya Muktapida, is credited with many adventures. It is stated that he defeated and dethroned the king of Kanauj, probably Vajrayudha. He is also stated to have visited *incognito* the capital of Paundravardhana in Bengal. He is also stated to have led an expedition against a king of Nepal. He seems to have been a very cruel king. About his reign, Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangini*, observes thus : "Such was for thirty-one years the reign of this famous king, who could not restrain his will. Princes and fishes, when their thirst is excited by riches and impure water respectively, leave their place and follow evil ways, with such result that they are brought into the strong net of death—the former by changes which fate dictates, and the latter by troops of fishermen."

Avantivarman ruled from 855 A. D. to 883 A. D. He was famous for his patronage of literature and the beneficent schemes of drainage and irrigation carried out by his minister of public works, Suyya by name. The next king was Sankar-varman who ruled from 883 to 902 A. D. He distinguished himself in war. He was responsible for the plundering of the treasures of the temples. King Jayasimha ruled from 1127 to 1155 A. D. He was the patron of Kalhana, the famous historian and poet of Kashmir. Kashmir passed under the rule of the Muslims in the 14th century. That Muslim dynasty continued to rule till 1587 when Kashmir was conquered by Akbar.



*The Rajputs.* The most outstanding feature of this period was the rise of the Rajputs. It is the Rajputs who dominated the politics of Northern India after the death of Harsha. They were responsible for the establishment of many states and it is from them that the Muslims conquered Northern India.

*Origin of the Rajputs.* The origin of Rajputs is a matter of great controversy. A lot of skill has been used to determine clearly the origin of the Rajputs. The difficulty has been increased on account of the fact that the Brahmans and the bards have given very lofty pedigrees to the Rajputs. The Rajputs claimed to be the lineal descendants of the Kshatriyas of the Vedic times. They traced their pedigrees from the Sun and the Moon and some of them believed in the theory of Agnikula.

The word 'Rajput' is used in certain parts of Rajasthan to denote the illegitimate sons of a Kshatriya chief or Jagirdar. Rajput is the corrupted form of the Sanskrit word Rajputra which means a "scion of the royal blood." The word Rajput occurs in the Puranas and also in the Harshacharita of Bana.

There are many theories about the origin of the Rajputs. According to Tod, the Rajputs were the descendants of the Sakas, Hunas, Kushanas, Gurjaras, etc. who came to India and settled there. In course of time, they were merged into Hindu society. They married Indian wives and made India their home. They were admitted into the Hindu castes. The upper ranks of these foreigners formed a separate war-like class and began to call themselves Rajputs while the lower classes began to be known as Jats, Ahirs, etc. In support of his theory, Tod pointed out certain resemblances between the various settlers and the Rajputs. Those were horse-worship, Asvamedha sacrifice, bards, war chariots, position of women, omens and auguries, love of strong fermented liquor, worship of arms, initiation to arms, etc.

The view of Tod was accepted by European scholars. According to William Brooke, "Recent investigations have thrown much new light on the origin of the Rajputs. A wide gulf lies between the Vedic Kshatriya and the Rajput of mediaeval times which it is now impossible to bridge. Some clans, with the help of an accommodating bard, may be able to trace their lineage to the Kshatriyas of Buddhist times, who were recognized as one of the leading elements in Hindu society, and in their own estimation, stood even higher than the Brahmans. But it is now certain that the origin of many clans dates from the Saka or Kushan invasion, which began about the middle of the second century B. C., or more certainly from that of the White Huns who destroyed the Gupta Empire about 480 A. D. The Gurjara tribe connected with the latter people adopted Hinduism, and their leaders formed the main stock from which the higher Rajput families sprang. When these new claimants to princely honours accepted the faith and institutions of Brahmanism the attempt would naturally be made to affiliate themselves to the mythical heroes whose exploits are recorded in the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Here arose the body of legend recorded in The Annals

by which a fabulous origin from the Sun or Moon is ascribed to two great Rajput branches, a genealogy claimed by other princely families like the Incas of Peru or the Mikado of Japan."

The theory of foreign origin is not accepted by scholars like C. V. Vaidya and Gauri Shankar Ojha. Their view is that ethnology, tradition and probabilities all point to the conclusion that the Rajputs were pure Aryans and not the descendants of the foreigners. According to Ojha, there is nothing striking in the similarities of the customs and manners of the Sakas and Rajputs. The worship of the Sun prevailed in India from the Vedic times and the practice of Sati existed before the coming of the Sakas as is proved by the Mahabharata. The practice of Asvamedha sacrifice was known. There is mention of such sacrifices in the epics. The worship of arms and horses is not a new thing. The ruling classes in India have always worshipped them. It is also pointed out that the reading of the Puranas that after King Mahananda of the Sisunaga dynasty, Sudra kings will exercise sovereignty, is not correct. There is evidence to prove the existence of Kshatriya rulers even after the Nanda and Mauryan dynasties.

When Pushyamitra established his power after killing Brihadra, the last Mauryan king, he performed the Asvamedha sacrifices and at one of those sacrifices Patanjali, the author of Mahabhashya, was also present. If Pushyamitra had been a Sudra, Patanjali would not have been present there. In the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharvela, there is a mention of the Kshatriyas of Kausambi. The Yadava Kshatriyas ruled over Mathura and the adjoining country before the war of the Mahabharata.

Certain inscriptions of the 9th and 10th centuries show the then reigning Rajput families drew their descent from Ram of Suryavamsi or Solar clan and Krishna of Chandravamsi or lunar race. The former Rajput rulers of Bikaner, Mewar, and Jaipur claimed their descent from Suryavamsi clan. Likewise, the princes of Jaisalmer and Cutch took pride in calling themselves the descendants of the Chandravamsi clan. All this must have some historical basis.

The theory of Agnikula origin of the Rajputs is given in Prithviraj Raso of Chand Bardai. According to this theory, Purusram, an incarnation of Vishnu, destroyed all the Kshatriyas. However, the Brahmans felt the need of a warrior class to defend them. They offered prayers to God at the top of Mt. Abu. A great *Havan* was performed for about 40 days. The prayers of the Brahmans brought forth fruit. From that Agnikund or fire-pit, there sprang up four heroes and each one of them created a separate Rajput class. Thus came into existence the Chauhans, the Solankis or Chalukiyas, the Parmars and the Pratiharas. This theory still finds credence among the Rajputs. Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar and others have found in this myth a confirmation of their theory of the foreign origin of the Rajputs. According to Edwards, the Agnikul myth represents a rite of purgation by fire, the scene of which was in Southern Rajputana whereby the impurity of foreigners was removed and they became fit to enter the caste system. The fictitious

character of the story is obvious. It represents a Brahminical effort to find a lofty origin for the Kshatriyas who stood very high in the social order and who gave them a lot of money in charity.

According to Dr. V. A. Smith, the Rajputs were a mixed race. Some of the Rajput clans were the descendants of foreigners like Hunas, Sakas and Kushanas and others belonged to the old Kshatriya tribes. In the beginning, these two groups were opposed to each other but in course of time they got mixed up with each other. To quote Smith, "Thus, the Kshatriya or Rajput group of castes is at present essentially an occupational group composed of all clans, following the Hindu ritual, who actually undertook the work of Government; consequently, people of most diverse races were and are lumped together as Rajputs, and most of the great Rajput clans now in existence in spite of their hoary pedigrees are descended either from foreign immigrants or from indigenous races such as the Gonds and Bhars."

*Rajput Culture and Civilisation.* The Rajputs were proud of themselves. They claimed lofty pedigrees. Very soon, they developed into a proud and haughty aristocracy. They claimed prerogatives and privileges and were very jealous to maintain them. However, they also developed many outstanding virtues. They cultivated a spirit of chivalry and lived up to it in spite of difficulties. Although war was the ruling passion of the Rajputs, they were generous and merciful even to enemies if the latter submitted and sought shelter. "A suppliant who had taken sanctuary by his hearth was sacred." According to Tod, "High courage, patriotism, loyalty, honour, hospitality and simplicity are qualities which must at once be conceded to them" (Rajputs). The Rajputs did not believe in Machiavellian principles. They had a very high sense of honour and respect for truth. Even when they were victorious, they did not resort to whole-sale massacre of their enemies. They did not cause needless misery to the poor and innocent people. They took pride in honouring women and sacrificed all for their honour and chastity. They tried to marry their daughters in the highest families. They offered the stiffest resistance to the foreign invaders but if they once submitted and took an oath of fidelity, they remained faithful to their word of honour and gave up allegiance only when they were themselves deserted by the foreign victors.

The whole of the life of a Rajput was devoted to war. On reaching puberty, a Rajput boy was initiated into knighthood by the ceremony of *Karg Bandai* or binding of the sword. He was brought up on the stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. His ideal was Rama. When not fighting, a Rajput spent his time in hunting and hawking or in feats of arms. During his leisure time, he was entertained by his bards and dancing girls. He also spent his time in drinking opium water (Kusumba) with his retainers. According to Bernier, "If the Rajput is a brave man, he need never entertain an apprehension of being deserted by his followers; they only require to be well led, for their minds are



made up to die in his presence rather than abandon him to his enemies. It is an interesting sight to see them on the eve of battle, with the fumes of opium in their heads, embrace and bid adieu one another, as if certain of death."

The Rajputs have been compared to the Scottish Highlanders. Their loyalty to the chief and the clan was very great. They spent their time in quarrelling with their neighbours and raiding their territories. They were prepared to fight bloody battles even for the most trivial reasons. It is stated that on one occasion a bloody battle was fought because a Raja, when out hawking picked up a partridge which had fallen over the boundary of his neighbour. The Rajputs loved war so passionately that they passed the night before the battle, listening to recitations from the Mahabharata, longing for the morning as a lonely wife longs for her husband. They asked: "When will the night pass away: when will the morning come: the time of battle?"

Although the Rajputs were strong and brave they failed to accomplish much. That was partly due to their clanish patriotism. They cared only for their chiefs and the clans. They did not bother about the country as a whole. They were not able to combine together and defeat the foreign invaders. They kept on quarrelling among themselves. They fought separately against the foreign invaders and each one of them was defeated separately. They wasted all their time and energy in mutual bickerings and jealousies and no wonder they accomplished nothing. Had the Rajputs learned to pool all their resources together, it would have been impossible for the Muslim invaders to defeat them. The history of India would have been different.

*Rajput Government.* The government of the Rajputs was of a feudal character. There were many Rajput kingdoms in Northern India and each kingdom was divided into a large number of estates or jagirs held by the Jagirdars. These Jagirdars were mostly of the same family as the Rajput chiefs. The strength and security of the state depended upon those Jagirdars. The latter were required to render military service to the king. They were bound to the king by ties of personal devotion. They were always anxious to prove their fidelity in times of difficulty or danger. They were also required to make certain payments to the king. Such a government was bound to be inefficient. It fostered individualism. It stood in the way of the combination of all the political forces in the state for a common purpose. Since everything depended upon the personality of the king, everything was paralysed if the king happened to be a weak person. No wonder, feuds were a common feature.

In the literature of the Rajput period, we find references to a regular bureaucracy. The generic term used for official was Kayastha. There are references to Kayasthas in inscriptions as officials. The official classes were mainly taken from the Brahmans.

The chief source of income of the state was revenue from the



lands. That was supplemented by taxes on commerce and trade. Some money was also paid by the Jagirdars.

It is to be noted that changes in the government at the centre did not affect the life of the people in the villages. The people continued to manage their affairs in their village councils undisturbed by bigger events. Revenue of the state was collected through the agency of the Panchayats. The latter also administered civil and criminal justice. The head-man of the village and the Patwari performed their usual functions of collecting land revenue and submitting the same to the Treasury.

*Social Life.* The caste system dominated the Rajput Society. There were not only the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras, but also many new sub-castes. In Rajput society, the Brahmans occupied the first place and commanded the greatest respect. They claimed to have the monopoly of all knowledge, whether it was spiritual or secular. They acted as councillors and ministers of the Rajput kings. However, most of them confined their attention to study, teaching, the performing of sacrifices, religious rites and other charitable functions. The Brahmans were known as priests and philosophers. They enjoyed those privileges and facilities which were not enjoyed by others, for example, capital punishment was not awarded to Brahmans. The Rajput rulers and soldiers came from the Kshatriyas. The work of business and money-lending was done by the Vaishyas. The Sudras followed the profession of agriculture and artisans. They also served all the three higher castes. The untouchables lived outside the village or the town.

Caste system was not rigid at the beginning of the Rajput period but it did become so in the later Rajput period. Bana refers to Parsava who was the son of a Brahman born of a Sudra woman. A Pratihara inscription of the year 861 A. D. states that Harishchandra, a Brahman by caste, married a Kshatriya girl, named Bhadra. In the case of an inter-caste marriage, the caste of the child was the same as that of the father. However, in the later Rajput period, the caste system became very rigid and in doing so the Brahmans played the most important part. During this period, a large number of new castes or sub-castes came into existence. Those sub-castes depended upon birth, occupation, place of residence, customs, religious practices, differences about food etc. The sub-castes were prominent particularly among the Brahmans. There came into existence Kanauji Brahmans, Gaur Brahmans, Malvi Brahmans, Telugu Brahmans, Konkan Brahmans etc. Similar sub-castes made their appearance among the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. Many new occupational castes such as those of the carders, weavers, smiths, fishermen, brewers, oil-men, cow-herds, carpenters etc., came into existence. A new caste known as that of the Kayasthas also appeared. The main function of the Kayasthas was clerical. Probably the Kayasthas came from many castes.

A feature of the court life of the Rajputs was the bard, the Bhat or Charan. He recited the heroic deeds of the ancestors of the Rajputs. He was an important and favoured person. He was the repository of the unwritten history of the clan. He was the undisputed authority on all genealogical matters. He was the registrar of the family's births, deaths and marriages. His verdict was final in settling the disputes about the division of ancestral property or of caste and consanguinity in the case of wedlock. The person of the bard was sacrosanct. He acted as a herald in war, and as a pledge for the fulfilment of contracts. If those contracts were broken, the bard would commit *Traga* or religious suicide and thereby bring the most terrible of curses upon the head of the offender.

The Rajputs loved and honoured their women-folk. There was no *Pardah* system among the Rajputs. Rajput women enjoyed great freedom and also exercised the right of choosing their husbands. There are references to the *Svayamvara* form of marriage among the Rajputs, whether they were rich or poor. Women married after attaining their majority. According to Alberuni, "Women were all educated and took an active part in public life. Girls could read and write and understand Sanskrit. They learned to play, dance and paint portraits." Some of the women were so much learned that they could defeat anybody in discussion. We are told that Shankarcharya, the great Brahman scholar, was defeated by a Brahman lady who was the wife of Mandan Mishra. Awanti Sundari, the wife of Raja Shekhar, the famous Sanskrit poet, was well-known for her scholarship. Indulekha, Marula, Shila, Subhadra, Laxmi, Vijjika, Morika, Padmashri and Madalsa were famous Sanskrit poetesses of the Rajput period. Akkadevi, the sister of Vikramaditya, the Solanki king, was not only a great warrior but also a great administrator. She was the governor of four provinces and she led an expedition against the fort in the Belgaon District, Bombay State and besieged it. Music and dancing were popular recreations among the ladies of higher ranks of society. Daughters of kings and warriors also took lessons in horsemanship.

Rajput women had high standards of chastity and patriotism. There are innumerable examples in Rajput history when women smilingly entered fire to save their honour or accompanied their dead husbands to the funeral pyre to show their devotion and admiration of their husbands. *Jauhar* was a mass suicide in order to escape defilement at the hands of the foreign victor which was worse than death. *Sati* was an individual act of suicide by a widow when her husband died fighting in battle.

The age of marriage was growing earlier. Re-marriage was not allowed. The result was that young widows had to live a life of misery. The practice of polygamy was common. The birth of a daughter was not liked by the Rajputs as it was felt that the father of a girl would have to show himself inferior at the time of her marriage. No wonder, many girls were killed at the time of their

birth. The condition of an average woman was deteriorating. She was becoming more and more dependent on her husband or his male relatives.

The upper classes lived in palatial buildings and enjoyed all kinds of comforts. They had even slaves. There were many festivals and fairs throughout the year. Music, dancing, drama, dice, hunting, chess etc. were very favourite hobbies. Both men and women put on ornaments. They were fond of various kinds of dresses.

A lot of emphasis was put on the purity of food. The upper classes did a lot of drinking. The use of opium and wine was common. The use of betel leaves was popular. Smoking does not seem to have been common. People refrained from the use of meat as an article of diet.

It has been stated that "the people were kept in ignorance, fed with unwholesome superstition and beguiled with gorgeous and never-ending festivals." The Hindus were losing their old assimilative power. They were losing their old vitality. The rigid caste system was making them unprogressive. The dominance of the Brahmans, both in spiritual and secular matters, was doing havoc.

*Economic Condition.* Agriculture was the main profession of the people. The Rajputs were great builders and they were responsible for the construction of many irrigation works, reservoirs, tanks, wells and canals in times of famine, scarcity or drought. A lot of help was given by the state to the farmers. Trade and commerce flourished during the Rajput period. Big cities were linked up with roads. The people were wealthy and prosperous. The fame of their riches invited the cupidity of the Muslim invaders.

*Literature.* The Rajput kings were great patrons of art and literature. Some of the Rajput kings were themselves authors of great repute. *Raja Munja* of Dhar was himself a great poet. *Raja Bhoja* is famous as an author on such important subjects as medicine, astronomy, agriculture, religion, architecture, lexicography, arts, etc. The names of some of his important works were *Ayurveda Sarvasva*, *Rajamriganka*, *Vyvahara Samuchchaya*, *Sabdanusasana* and *Yuktikalpataru*. He patronised such eminent literary men as *Padam-gupta*, *Dhanika*, *Halayudha*, *Dhananjaya* and *Amitagati*. Important books on poetry, drama, romance, law, politics, history, science and medicine were written by scholars who were patronised by the Rajput rulers. *Rajsekhara* lived in the court of King *Mahendrapal* of *Kanauj* and he wrote his drama known as *Karpuramanjari* in *Prakrit*. *Jayadeva* was the poet-laureate of King *Lakshmanasena* of *Bengal* and he wrote the famous *Gitagovinda* or "Song of the Cow-herd." This work is half drama and half lyric. It describes the love of *Krishna* and milk-maids particularly his beloved *Radha*. *Kalhana* wrote the famous *Rajatarangini* or "River of Kings." *Somadeva* wrote his famous *Kathasaritasagara* or "Ocean of Tales." *Chand Bardai* wrote his famous *Prithvi Raj Raso* to praise the exploits of his patron King *Prithvi Raj*.



Bhatti wrote *Ravanavadha*. Magha wrote *Sisupalvadha* Shri Harsha wrote *Naisadhacharita*. Padamgupta wrote *Navasahasanka-charita*. Damodar Gupta wrote *Kultanimata*. Dandin wrote *Dasakumaracharita*. Dhanpal wrote *Tilakamanjari* and *Yasatilaka*. Subandhu wrote *Vasavadatta*. Bhavabhuti wrote *Maltiladha*, *Mahaviracharita* and *Uttar Ramcharita*. It is stated that Bhavabuti ranks next only to Kalidasa. In the matter of force and passion of style and superb mastery of diction, Bhavabuti even excels Kalidasa. Anandavardhan wrote the drama known as *Prabhodhachandra*. Bhatta Naryana wrote *Venisanhara*. Murari wrote *Anargh Raghava*. Bilhana wrote *Vikramankacharita*. Sandhyakarandit wrote *Ramcharita* which is the history of the Pala dynasty. Jayanak wrote *Prithiviraj Vijaya*. Hemchandra wrote *Kumarpalcharita*. Kshemendra wrote *Brihata Kathamanjari*. Jayaditya wrote *Kasikvriti*. Bhartrihari wrote a commentary on the *Mahabhasya* of Patanjali. Sarva-varman wrote a book on grammar known as *Kantra*. Hemchandra, Yadavabhatt, Purshottam Deva and Bhatta Kshirswami wrote *Koshas* or dictionaries. Commentaries were written on the *Kamasutras* of Vatsyayana. Kaka Pandit wrote a new book called *Koka Shastra*. Sharangadeva wrote a book on music entitled *Sangit Ratnakar*. *Pramana Mimansa*, a book on philosophy and Jainism, was written by Hemchandra. Dharamakirti wrote *Nyayabindu*, a book on Buddhist philosophy. Commentaries on *Nyaya* were written by Uddotkar, Udaiyanacharya and others. Shridhar wrote a book on *Vaisheshika* philosophy and Vachaspati Misra wrote on *Sankhya* philosophy. The most original work on philosophy was that of Samkaracharya. Vijnaneshvara wrote the *Mitakhshara* which is a commentary on Hindu law. Vagabhatta was a famous physician and Bhaskaracharya was a famous astronomer. While Vagabhatta wrote *Ashtang Sangraha*, a book on medicine, Bhaskaracharya wrote *Siddhanata Shiromani*, a book on astronomy. *Madhavanidan*, a book on medicine, was written by Madhavakar.

It is to be noted that it was during the Rajput period that vernacular literature made progress. It is rightly contended that the foundations of the modern vernacular languages of India such as Hindi, Gujrati, Marathi and Bengali were laid down in the Rajput period. Poetry was first developed in the vernacular literature of this period. Hemchandra Suri, a great Jain saint, made a great contribution towards our national literature.

*Art.* The Rajputs were great builders and their irrigation works, bathing places, reservoirs and forts give an ample proof of the skill of their engineers and architects. The art critics divide the evolution of temple architecture in the Rajput period into two parts. The first part covered the period from 600 to 900 A.D. The second part covered the period from 900 to 1200 A.D. During the first period, there was a regular progress in the evolution of architecture. During the second period we have the abundance of ornamentation in temple architecture. The originality of the ancient times was lost and the artisans relied on volume to give an expression of grandeur. Their tastes degenerated and we come across obscene figures. That was probably due to the influence of Tantrism on Hinduism. It has



rightly been said that there is no beauty of original art in the architectural monuments of the age.

Some of the important specimens of the Rajput art are the majestic, extensive and strong fortresses of Chittorgarh, Ranthambhore and Kumbhalgarh in Rajasthan, Mandu, Gwalior and Chandernagore in Madhya Bharat and Asirgarh in Madhya Pradesh. Examples of domestic architecture of the Rajputs are the palaces of Mansingh at Gwalior, the buildings at Amber (Jaipur) and Lake palaces at Udaipur. Many of the Rajput cities and palaces stand among hills in forts or by the side of beautiful artificial lakes. The castle of Jodhpur in Rajasthan is perched upon a lofty and inaccessible rock overlooking the town, with growing bastions and battlements. Even Babur praises them as beautiful with "their domes covered with plates of copper gilt."

The Rajput rulers and nobles gave a lot of money for the building of temples. Those temples have won the admiration of art critics. Although most of those temples were destroyed by the Muslims, a few of them have survived and they give an idea of the artistic achievements of this age.

The Khajuraho group of temples in Bundelkhand has as many as 30 temples. They have a definite individual architectural character. Each temple stands on a high and solid masonry terrace. None of them is an imposing edifice as the largest one is only 100 feet in length. However, they are famous for elegant proportions, graceful contours and rich surface treatment. The Sikharas of the Khajuraho temples are most refined and elegant. The exterior and interior parts of the temples have very fine sculptures. These temples are dedicated to Jain Tirathankaras and Brahmanical deities like Siva and Vishnu.

There are 16 Brahmanical and Jain temples at Osia which is 32 miles away from Jodhpur. There is Kalika Mata temple at Chittorgarh and Ekalinga temple a few miles away from Udaipur. The Jain temples at Mount Abu have a white marble hall and a central dome of 11 concentric rings and richly carved vaulted ceiling and pillars. All these show excellent and delicate workmanship. Practically every inch of the surface has beautiful sculptures.

*The Pratihara Empire.* The Pratiharas seem to have been a section of the larger tribe called Gurjaras who immigrated into India after the Hunas. They started well under Nagabhata I. He was responsible for saving western India from the Arabs. He was successful in bringing under his control a large number of states which had been overrun by the Arabs. He established his supremacy over the Gurjara kingdom of Nandipuri. Probably, he also brought under his control the Pratihara family of Jodhpur. Nagabhata I was able to leave behind a strong state comprising Malwa and parts of Rajputana and Gujarat.

*Vatsaraja.* The next important ruler of the dynasty was Vatsaraja. At the time of his accession to the throne in about 778 A.D. his empire comprised Malwa and Eastern Rajputana. Gradu-

ally, he defeated his dominions in the North. He later on, wrested the empire from the Bhadras. He also defeated Dharmapala, the ruler of Gauda or Bengal, and carried away his riches and state. It is not possible to say whether Vatsaraja actually invaded Bengal or not but he must have established his supremacy over a large part of northern India. By doing so he laid the foundations of a mighty empire. There was going on a struggle for supremacy in Northern India between the Gurjaras, Rashtrakutas and Palas. Although both Dharmapala and Vatsaraja were defeated by Dhruva, the Rashtrakuta ruler, Vatsaraja seems to have suffered much and we know nothing about him after his defeat.

**Nagabhata II** Vatsaraja was succeeded by Nagabhata II who ruled from about 805 to 839 A.D. While trying to recover his position, he was defeated by Govind III, the Rashtrakuta king. Nagabhata was succeeded by Ramabhadra. The latter was succeeded by his son Mihirabhoja, who ruled from 836 to 885 A.D. With the accession of Mihirabhoja, a new and glorious chapter began in the history of the Pratiharas. Within a few years of his accession, he succeeded in consolidating the power of the Pratiharas. His suzerainty was acknowledged upto the foot of the Himalayas. He overran Southern Rajputana and the tracts round Ujjain upto the Narmada river. However, he was defeated by Dhruva II, the Rashtrakuta king. There is reason to believe that the armies of Mihirabhoja penetrated as far as Peona (Karnal district) and even beyond it in the west and Saurashtra in the South-West.

According to Dr. R.C. Majumdar, "Bhoja had the reputation of a strong ruler, able to maintain peace in his kingdom and defend it against external dangers. He stood as a bulwark of defence against Muslim aggression, and left this task as a sacred legacy to his successors."

Mihirabhoja was succeeded by his son Mahendrapala I who ruled from about 885 to 910 A.D. In the beginning of his reign, he conquered the greater part of Magadha and North Bengal. His authority was recognised as far as Saurashtra. It appears that he lost some territory to the ruler of Kashmir.

The next powerful ruler was Mahipala who ruled from about 912 to 944 A.D. At the very beginning of his reign, he had to face aggression at the hands of the Rashtrakutas. We are told that Indra III "completely devastated" the city of Kanauj and plundered the land as far as Prayag. However, in spite of this, Mahipala was able to re-establish the fortunes of his family with the help of his feudatories. He had to face trouble towards the end of his reign from Krishna III, the Rashtrakuta king. Before 940 A.D., two forts of the Pratihara empire were captured by the Rashtrakutas.

Mahendrapal I was succeeded by his son Rajyapala II. Devapala ascended the throne in about 940 A.D. There was a steady decline in the power and authority of the Pratihara rulers. The Pratihara empire was divided among the Chalukayas of Anhilwada the Chandellas of Jejakabhukti, Chedis of Dahala, Parmaras of

Malwa, the Guhilas of Southern Rajputana, the Cahamanas of Sakambhari and the Kachhapaghatas of Gwalior.

According to Dr. R C. Majumdar, the Pratihara empire continued in full glory for nearly a century. It was the last great empire in Southern India before the Muslim conquest. It recalled, and to a certain extent rivalled, the Gupta Empire. It brought political unity in Northern India. Its great contribution was the successful resistance to the foreign invasions from the West. The Pratiharas stood as the bulwark of India's defence against the aggression of the Muslims. It was the power of the Pratihara armies that effectively barred the progress of the Muslims for nearly 300 years.

*Chandellas of Bundelkhand.* Jejakabhukti was the ancient name of Bundelkhand. It was a part of the Pratihara empire of Kanauj. In the 9th century A.D., Yasovarman, a Chandella Chief, established a kingdom and conquered Kalanjar which became the stronghold of his kingdom. Mahoba was made the capital. The important rulers were Dhanga and Kirtivarman. Peramal was the last Chandella king who enjoyed independence. In 1182 A.D., he submitted to Prithvi Raj and in 1203 he submitted to Kutub-ud-din. The Chandella rulers were great builders. Kirtivarman was responsible for the construction of a beautiful lake near Mahoba. A number of beautiful temples built by the Chandellas can be seen at Khajuraho.

*Parmaras of Malwa.* The Parmaras of Malwa arose on the ruins of the Pratihara empire of Kanauj. Upendra founded his dynasty in about 820 A.D. Munja was the 7th ruler of this dynasty. He was not only a great patron of learning but was himself a great poet. Dharmaraja and Dhanika, two famous writers, lived in his court. However, the most important ruler of this dynasty was Raja Bhoja. He ruled for about 42 years from 1018 to 1060 A.D. He was not only a learned man himself, but he also patronised learned people. He was responsible for the construction of a beautiful lake known as Bhojapur Lake. He was also responsible for the construction of a Sanskrit College. He fell a victim to the combined attack of the rulers of Gujarat and Chedi. He was the most enlightened king in history and fables. He was probably the last independent ruler of his dynasty.

*Chauhans of Ajmer and Delhi.* The Chauhana clan of Rajputs ruled over Sambhar and Ajmer. The most important ruler was Prithviraj Chauhan. He played a very important part in the history of India at the time of its conquest by the Muslims. His name has been made immortal by Chand Bardai, his court poet, by writing the famous book *Prithvîraj Raso*.

It is well-known that Prithviraj Chauhan defeated Shahab-ud Din Ghori in 1191 A.D. in the first Battle of Tarain. However, he himself was defeated in 1192 in the second Battle of Tarain and thus ended the Chauhans of Ajmer and Delhi.

*The Palas.* Gopala was the founder of the Pala dynasty. He ruled from 750 A.D. to 770 A.D. He was selected by the people to rule over them as they were fed up with the anarchy prevailing at

that time. It appears that Gopala established peace in his kingdom and laid the foundations of the future greatness of his dynasty. Before his death, he consolidated his position over the whole of Bengal.

*Dharmapala.* Gopal was succeeded by his son Dharmapala who ruled for about 4 years from 770 to 810 A.D. He was a man of dynamic personality and he actually achieved a lot in his lifetime.

Dharmapala defeated Indraraja or Indrayudha, the ruler of Kanauj, and deposed him. He placed Chakrayudha on the throne of Kanauj. After this victory, he held a Darbar at Kanauj. This Darbar was attended by a large number of vassal chiefs. Those chiefs not only approved of his action but also "bowed down respectfully with their diadems trembling." This shows that all accepted his suzerainty and were left undisturbed in their internal affairs so long as they paid homage and fulfilled other conditions. Dharmapala became the paramount lord in Northern India and was called *Uttarapathasvamin*.

However, Dharmapala was not left undisturbed in his newly acquired possessions. He was defeated by Vatsaraja, the Pratihara ruler. Vatsaraja was himself defeated by Dhruva, the Rashtrakuta ruler. Dhruva also defeated Dharmapala. However, as Dhruva went back to the Deccan, Dharmapala did not lose much. In a way, Dharmapala gained as the Pratiharas who were his rivals, were crushed by Dhruva. Dharmapala took advantage of the position and made himself the lord of practically the whole of Northern India.

There was a war between Dharmapala and Nagabhata II, the Pratihara ruler. In that war, Dharmapala was defeated but Nagabhata II was not able to enjoy the fruits of his victory as he himself was defeated by Govinda III, the Rashtrakuta ruler. According to Dr. R.C. Majumdar, Dharmapala was the hero of a hundred fights. Under him, Bengal emerged as the most powerful state in Northern India. Dharmapala was a great patron of Buddhism. He founded the Vikramasila monastery which ultimately developed into a great centre of Buddhist learning. He also founded a great Vihara at Somapuri. Another monastery was founded by him at Odantapuri. It is rightly said that Dharmapala was great both in arts of peace and war.

*Devapala (810-850 A.D.).* Dharmapala was succeeded by his son, Devapala. He was the worthy son of a worthy father. He not only maintained intact the territories inherited by him from his father but also added to them. He got tributes from the rulers of the whole of Northern India, from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas and from the Eastern to the Western Ocean. His campaigns took him to Kamboja in the West and the Vindhyas in the South.

Ramabhadra, the Pratihara ruler, was defeated by Devapala. King Mihirbhaja also was defeated by him. He also defeated Amoghavarsha, the Rashtrakuta ruler.



Devapala was a great patron of Buddhism. He gave 5 villages to the Buddhists. He constructed many temples and monasteries in Magadha. According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, "The reigns of Dharmapala and Devapala constitute the most brilliant chapter in the history of Bengal. Never before or since, till the advent of the British, did Bengal play such an important role in Indian politics."

Devapala was succeeded by Vighrahapala. He himself was succeeded by Narayanapala who ruled for more than half a century. He was a man of pacific and religious disposition. He was defeated by the Rashtrakutas and the Palas lost Magadha. For some time, even North Bengal came into the hands of the Pratiharas. There were many revolts. Narayanapala was succeeded by Rajyapala and he was succeeded by Gopala II and Vighrahapala II.

*Mahipala.* The next ruler was Mahipala I who ruled from 988 to 1038 A.D. During his reign, the Palas became powerful once again. King Rajendra, Chola attacked the North but Mahipala was able to check his advance beyond the Ganges. Mahipala was defeated by Gangeyadeva, the Kalachuri ruler. Mahipala is criticised for not joining hands with the other Hindu rulers who had organised a confederacy to defend India against the Muslims but his justification was that his hands were already full and he was helpless in the matter.

Mahipala has been called the founder of the Second Pala Empire. He not only saved the Pala kingdom from the impending ruin but also restored to a large extent the old glory and power of the Palas. He constructed and repaired a large number of religious buildings at Banaras, Sarnath and Nalanda. His name is associated with a number of tanks and towns in Bengal.

Mahipala I was succeeded by his son, Nayapala and he was succeeded by Vighrahapala III. The next ruler was Mahipala II. It was during his reign that his feudatories became powerful. A number of them combined together and defeated Mahipala II. Surapala was the next ruler. He was succeeded by Ramapala. He was a very strong man and he fought against heavy odds. He committed suicide in about 1120 A. D.

The successors of Ramapala were weak and they could not stop the decline of the Empire. The last Pala king about whom we know anything was Govindapala.

The Pala kings were followers and patrons of Buddhism. They gave a lot of money to monasteries. Atisa, the famous Buddhist monk, went to Tibet to spread Buddhism there. The Palas were not intolerant to other religions. They gave large gifts to Brahmins and also constructed temples in honour of Hindu Gods.

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## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE RASHTRAKUTA EMPIRE

There are many theories regarding the origin of the Rashtrakutas. The view of Fleet was that the Rashtrakutas were the descendants of the Rathors of the North. The view of Burnell was that the Rashtrakutas were connected with the Dravidian Raddis of Andhradesa. The most probable view seems to be that the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed descended from the Rastikas or Rathikas who were so important in the middle of the third century B. C. that they are mentioned in the edicts of Asoka.

The first rulers of the Rashtrakuta dynasty were Dantivarman, Indra I, Govinda I, Karka I and Indraraja II. They do not seem to have achieved anything important. As a matter of fact, we do not even know definitely where their territory was. The greatness of the Rashtrakutas started with *Dantidurga*. He is stated to have performed the Hiranagarbha-ceremony at Ujjain after winning victories over Kanchi, Kalinga, Kosala, Shri-Saila, Malava, Lata and Tank. He defeated the Chalukya king and won victory over Vallabha. He took part in the campaign against the Arabs and the latter were so completely defeated that they never dared to invade Gujarat again. Dantidurga was given the title of Prithvivallabha. He destroyed the Gurjara kingdom of Nandipuri. He led an expedition into Malwa. He brought eastern Madhya Pradesh under his political influence. By 750 A. D., he became the master of Central and Southern Gujarat and the whole of Madhya Pradesh and Berar. Dantidurga defeated Kirtivarman II, the Chalukya ruler and thus became the master of the whole of Maharashtra.

The next ruler was Krishna I who ruled from 758 A. D. to 773 A. D. He defeated Kirtivarman II and the Chalukya empire was completely finished by about 760 A. D. After that, Krishna I defeated the Gangas who were ruling in Mysore. The Chalukya king of Vengi was also defeated. Southern Konkan was also conquered. Krishna I was not only a great conqueror but also a great builder. He got a magnificent temple of Siva constructed at Ellora. That was made of solid rock. That temple is considered to be a marvel of architecture. Dr. V.A. Smith described it as "the most marvellous architectural freak in India".

*Dhruva*. The next ruler was Govinda II who ruled from 773 to 780 A.D. He was succeeded by *Dhruva* who ruled from 780 to 793 A.D. He was a very ambitious man and would like to become the over-lord of Northern India. He defeated Vatsaraja, the Pratihar ruler. He also defeated Dharmapala of the Pala dynasty. The ruler of Vengi was humbled. The Pahlva ruler was made to submit.

It is rightly pointed out that the Rashtrakuta power reached its zenith in the reign of Dhruva.

*Govinda III.* The next ruler was *Govinda III* and he ruled from 793 to 814 A.D. He was also an ambitious ruler like Dhruva. He defeated Nagabhata II, the Pratihara ruler and put his own nominee on the throne. Dharamapala, the ruler of Bengal, was also defeated. Govinda III advanced as far as the Himalayas. The Pallava ruler was forced to submit to him. During his absence in Northern India, a confederacy was formed to fight against them but the same was crushed. According to Dr. Altekar, "Govinda III was undoubtedly the ablest of the Rashtrakuta kings. He was unrivalled in courage, generalship, statesmanship and martial exploits. His invincible armies conquered all the territories between Kanauj and Cape Comorin and Banaras and Broach."

*Amoghavarsha.* Govinda III was succeeded by his son Amoghavarsha who ruled from 814 to 878 A.D. There were dissensions in the royal family and consequently there was a lot of trouble. The ruler of Gangavadi asserted his independence. Vijayaditya II, the ruler of Vengi, who had been dethroned by Govinda III, attacked the Rashtrakuta empire to have his revenge. There was anarchy and Amoghavarsha lost his throne. However, he recovered the same once again. After that, he attacked Vijayaditya II and defeated him. The armies of the Rashtrakutas remained in occupation of Vengi for about 12 years. There was a continuous war between the Rashtrakutas and the Gangas. The Gangas were able to drive out the Rashtrakutas from most of their territory and Amoghavarsha came to terms with them. Amoghavarsha was inclined towards Jainism and he devoted his time to religion and literature. According to Dr. Altekar, "Amoghavarsha's name will endure as of a ruler who established peace and order in his kingdom, encouraged art and literature, practised the principles he preached and did not flinch even from offering a limb of his body by way of sacrifice, when he thought that public welfare demanded it."

Amoghavarsha was succeeded by his son Krishna II who ruled for 36 years from 878 to 914 A.D. His important wars were against the Pratiharas and Eastern Chalukyas. He was surrounded by his enemies and defeated on all fronts. His efforts to put his grandson on the Chola throne failed.

Krishna II was succeeded by his grandson, Indra III who ruled from 914 to 922 A.D. He renewed the war against the Pratiharas and occupied Kanauj. He also fought against Vengi but without much success. He was succeeded by Amoghavarsha II. The next ruler was Govinda IV. He was a tyrant and was removed from the throne by Amoghavarsha III who ruled from 936 to 939 A.D.

*Krishna III.* The next ruler was *Krishna III* who ruled from 940 to 968 A.D. He invaded the Chola kingdom in 943 but was not successful. In 949 A.D., the Chola army was defeated in the battle of Takkolam and Krishna III led his victorious march upto Rameshwaram where he built a pillar of victory. Tondamandalam was annexed to the Rashtrakuta empire. In about 963 A.D. Krishna



III led an expedition to Northern India. He also marched into Bundelkhand. He led an expedition to Malwa. The view of Dr. Altekar was that Krishna III was one of the ablest monarchs of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. He may not have been as successful in his campaigns in Northern India as Dhruva or Govinda III, but it cannot be denied that he was the lord of the whole of the Deccan. He was in effective possession of a large part of the Chola kingdom.

The next ruler was Khottiga who ruled from 967 to 972 A.D. He was succeeded by Karkka II. The prestige of the empire was already gone by this time and the new ruler worsened the situation by bad administration. No wonder, he lost his throne within 18 months. Taila II who was a feudatory of the Rashtrakutas revolted in 973 A.D. and defeated Karkka II. By 975 A.D., Taila became the overlord of the Deccan. It was under these circumstances that the Rashtrakutas disappeared from history.

*Rashtrakuta administration : King.* In Rashtrakuta administration, the king was the centre and fountain of all power. His titles were Maharajadhiraja, Paramabhattacharya, Dharavarsha, Akalavarsha, Suvarnavarsha, Vikramavolaka and Fagattunga. The king attended the royal court regularly except when he was away in connection with some expedition. There was a lot of pomp and show at the royal court. That was considered to be a visible proof of the might of the king. At the reception hall, visitors were admitted only by express permission of the royal chamberlain. Feudatories and ambassadors had to wait until they were ushered in by the court officials. The emperor was seated on an imposing throne, wearing a number of costly jewels and ornaments. A bodyguard was always in attendance. Dancing girls also added to the dignity of the scene. The court of the king was attended by vassal chiefs, foreign ambassadors, high military and civil officers, poets, doctors, astrologers and the representatives of the guilds.

Kingship was hereditary and usually the eldest son succeeded to the throne. He was formally installed as Yuvaraja. In certain cases, a younger son could also be appointed heir-apparent if he was considered to be abler. Such a thing was done in the case of Govinda III. In certain cases, the elder brothers were deposed by the younger brothers. This was done by Dhruva and Govinda IV.

It was the duty of Yuvaraja to help the King in the administration of the country. He was expected to lead military expeditions or accompany his father on those expeditions. The princes other than the Yuvaraja were appointed as provincial governors. Princesses also occupied important government posts in the Rashtrakuta period. Chandrabellabba, a daughter of Amoghavarsha I, administered the Raichur Doab in 837 A.D. Silabhattarika made a land grant without the permission of her husband, Dhruva. On many occasions, succession was not a peaceful one.

*Ministers.* The work of the administration was carried on by the king with the help of ministers. We do not possess definite information regarding the names of the portfolios of the various ministers. However, the ministry must have consisted of the Prime

Minister, Foreign Minister, Revenue Minister, Treasurer, Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief and Purohita or head priest. We do not know anything regarding the qualifications of the ministers and the manner in which they were appointed. However, it can be presumed that they must have been chosen for their general competence and proficiency in political and military matters. Most of the ministers were also military officers. There was complete confidence between the king and his ministers. The latter are described as the right hand of the king.

We have no knowledge about the existence of a superior civil service like that of the Amatyas under the Mauryas or the Kumaramatyas under the Guptas. We do not know how the central government exercised supervision and control over the various provinces and districts within the empire. However, it appears that there were officers of the central government under the Rashtrakutas who went on tours of inspection throughout the empire. Feudatories and district officers were often called to the capital to explain their conduct. The central government employed its own agents to keep a watch over the whole of the empire and it was their duty to send the necessary information to the central government.

*Vassal States.* Rashtrakuta empire was partly directly administered and partly it consisted of the vassal states. Important feudatories enjoyed almost complete autonomy. They could even alienate villages without the consent of the king. They had their own sub-feudatories. The latter had very little of independent power and were called Rajas merely by courtesy. They could not alienate land without sanction from higher authorities. The feudatories were required to obey the orders of the sovereign. They had to attend his court at periodical intervals. They were bound to pay regular tribute. They had to supply a certain number of soldiers. Sometimes they were required to take part personally in the military campaigns of the king. They had to keep a resident of the central government in their courts. Likewise, they had to keep their own representatives at the imperial capital to keep a watch over the happenings there. If the feudatories revolted, they were subjected to a number of indignities. They were required to surrender their treasures, elephants and horses.

*Directly Administered Areas.* As regards the directly administered areas, these were divided into Rashtras and Vishayas. The number of villages in a Vishaya varied from 1,000 to 4,000. Each Vishaya was sub-divided into Bhuktis and each Bhukti consisted of 50 to 70 villages. The Bhuktis seem to have been named after the names of the towns of the headquarters. Each Bhukti was divided into 20 villages. The village was the smallest administrative unit.

The head of a Rashtra was Rashtrapati. He was in charge of both civil and military administration. It was his duty to maintain peace and order within the area in his jurisdiction. He was required to keep a watchful eye on lesser feudatories and officers. If any one became rebellious, he was required to put him down immediately. The Rashtrapati had a sufficient military force under his command.

He was usually a military officer as well. He enjoyed the status and titles of a vassal. A Rashtrapati can be compared with Uparika in Gupta administration. The Rashtrapatis were in charge of fiscal administration. It was their duty to collect the land revenue. They were also required to keep careful records of local rights and privileges. They were required to note down the names and numbers of the lands and villages whose revenue had been granted to temples and Brahmanas. They could not alienate any revenue without the permission of the king. They could not appoint district and sub-divisional officers.

*Vishayapatis* and *Bhogapatis* exercised the same functions within a restricted area which were performed by the Rashtrapatis within a wider area. Appointments to the above posts were made either as a reward for military service or as a recognition of administrative ability. In some cases, posts became hereditary.

Vishayapatis and Bhogapatis performed their duties of revenue collection with the help of hereditary revenue officers known as Nadgavundas of Desagramakutas. These officers were paid in the form of rent-free lands.

Village administration was carried on by the village headman and the village accountant. These posts were usually hereditary. The headman was responsible for maintaining law and order in the village. He had a local militia at his disposal. The peace of the village was not disturbed by thieves and dacoits but it was disturbed by the rebellions of feudatories and rivalries of neighbouring villages. Headmen were required to discharge the duties of military captains. They were responsible for the collection of village revenues. They had to pay the revenue to the royal treasury or put the same in granaries. The village accountant worked as an assistant.

The question has been asked as to how far there was a popular voice in the administration of the country. The view of Dr. Altekar is that the popular element was fairly effective. Each village had a popular council on which every adult householder was represented. Sub-committees were appointed to manage local schools, tanks, temples and roads. They could also receive trust properties and administer them according to the conditions laid down by the donors. The sub-committees were required to work in co-operation with the village headman. Village councils also decided civil suits and those decisions were enforced by the Government. There were similar popular councils in towns.

There are references to Vishayamahattaras or Elders of the District and Rashtramahattaras or Elders of the Province. It appears that there must have been popular bodies at the headquarters of the district and province. Their functions were similar to those of the village councils. We have no direct evidence to show the existence of councils of the districts and provinces. A popular assembly or Parliament at the capital of Rashtrakuta empire is not mentioned anywhere. It is possible that there may not have been any such council. That must have been partly due to the difficulties of communication and transport in those days. The popular voice must have been effective only in the villages.



*Military.* The Rashtrakuta emperors were very ambitious persons and no wonder they did all that they could to make their military machine powerful and efficient. The Rashtrakuta rulers maintained big armies but we have no definite information regarding their exact number. Dr. Altekar is of the opinion that the Rashtrakuta army could not have been less than 5 lakhs. A large part of the army was stationed at the capital. There was also an army of the South and an army of the North. Standing armies were maintained for purposes of defence and for conquests. The army was famous for its infantry division, but this does not mean that cavalry was not important. Some battalions were supplied by feudatories and provincial governors. This was done when some important military venture was to be undertaken. The troops of the military castes had their military training before joining the army. The commissariat was organised with the help and co-operation of rich merchants. Recruits to the army were taken from all the castes, including Brahmans and Jains. The Rashtrakuta Generals like Bankeya, Srivijaya, Narasimha etc. were Jains.

*Sources of Revenue.* There were many sources of revenue of the Rashtrakuta Empire. A lot of money came in the form of tributes from the feudatories. Income also came from mines, forests and waste lands. Land tax known as Uddranga or Bhogakara brought in a lot of money. It was about one-fourth of the produce. It was collected in kind in two or three instalments. The lands given to Brahmanas and temples were also taxed although the rate was lower. Remissions of land revenue were made only on the occasion of famines. Taxes were also collected on fruits, vegetables, etc. Octroi and excise duties were levied on a large number of articles. Villagers were required to arrange for free board and lodging and transport for officers visiting the village.

*Religious Condition.* The worship of Siva and Vishnu was popular within the Rashtrakuta empire. There are many references to these gods in the inscriptions. Their seals have either Garuda, Vahana of Vishnu, or Siva seated in the attitude of Yoga. Many Brahmanical sacrifices were performed during this period. Dantidurga celebrated the Hiranyagarbha sacrifice at Ujjayini or Ujjain. There are references to Tuladanas or gifts of gold equal to one's own weight.

Temples were constructed to instal images for purpose of worship. These images were worshipped every day and an elaborate ritual was employed on that occasion. The only important monument of this period is the Siva temple at Ellora.

Jainism was patronised by Amoghavarsha I, Indra IV, Krishna II and Indra III. Buddhism had declined during this period and its important centre was Kanheri.

*Art.* The Rashtrakutas made a splendid contribution to Indian art. The rock-cut shrines at Ellora and Elephanta belong to this period. The temple of Kailasa at Ellora is the most extensive and sumptuous. This temple was hewn out of a rocky hill-side by Krishna I in the 8th century. It is similar to the Lokesvara temple at Pattadakal. It is



hewn out of a great rectangular quarry. It measures 27 feet long and 154 feet wide with a scarp of 107 feet deep at the back. There are four main parts of the temple and these are the main shrine, the entrance gateway to the west, a Nandi pavilion and cloisters all round the courtyard. It is possible that the supplementary shrines were excavated at a later date. The sculptured panels of Dasavatara, Bhairava, Ravana shaking the Mount Kailasa, dancing Shiva and Vishnu and Lakshmi listening to music are superb. According to Percy Brown, "The temple of Kailasa at Ellora is not only the most stupendous single work of art executed in India, but as an example of rock architecture it is unrivalled. The Kailasa is an illustration of one of those occasions when men's minds, hearts and heads work in unison towards the consummation of a supreme ideal. It was under such conditions of religious and cultural stability that this grand monolith representation of Siva's paradise was produced." (*Indian Architecture : Buddhist and Hindu*, p. 90).

The Dasavatara temple is the largest and the simplest. There are figure sculptures of great size surrounding the wall depicting both the Vaisnava and Siva themes. The Hiranyakasipu relief is the most outstanding sculpture among them.

There are five Jaina shrines cut from rocks and the important among them are Chhota Kailasa, Indra Sabha and Jagannatha Sabha. Percy Brown puts special emphasis on "the richly carved details and perfect finish, particularly of the pillars" and "the finish and the accuracy of the cutting" of these shrines.

As regards the Great or Main shrine at Elephanta, it is considered to be superior to the shrines at Ellora. The sculptured reliefs of Nataraja and Sadasiva at Elephanta are better executed than the Bhairava relief at Ellora. The sculptures of Ellora seem to be "less accomplished in technique, though more florid in style." In sculptured reliefs of Ardhanarisvara and Trimurti or Mahesamurti at Elephanta, God is represented in triple form corresponding to three aspects of his functions, the creation, protection and destruction of the universe.

It is pointed out that originally there were paintings on some of the shrines. Fragments of those paintings are even now seen in the porch of the great temple of Kailasa at Ellora and the ceilings of the Mahesamurti shrine at Elephanta.

According to Dr. Altekar, "The period of Rashtrakuta ascendancy in the Deccan from about 753 to 975 A.D. constitutes perhaps the most brilliant chapter in the history. No other ruling dynasty in the Deccan played such a dominant part in the history of India till the rise of the Marathas as an imperial power in the eighteenth century. No less than three of its rulers, Dhruva, Govinda III and Indra III, carried their victorious arms into the heart of North India and by inflicting severe defeats upon its most powerful rulers changed the whole course of the history of that region. Their success in the south was equally remarkable and Krishna III literally advanced

as far as Ramesvara in the course of his victorious career. All the great powers of India, the Pratiharas and the Palas in the North, and the Eastern Chalukyas and Cholas in the South, were subjugated by them at one time or another. They, no doubt, suffered reverses at times but on the whole their military campaigns against powerful adversaries were repeatedly crowned with brilliant success."

### *Suggested Readings*

- |                      |                                       |
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## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE CHALUKYAS

The Chalukyas were the dominant power in the Deccan from 6th to 8th century A.D. and then again from 10th to 12th century A.D. We have to deal with the Chalukyas of Badami or the Early Western Chalukyas, the later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi. The early Western Chalukyas ruled for about two centuries from the middle of 6th to about the middle of 8th century when they were ousted by the Rashtrakutas. The later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani overthrew the Rashtrakutas in the second half of 10th century and continued to rule till the end of 12th century. The Eastern Chalukyas ruled from 7th century to 12th century.

*Origin.* There is a lot of controversy with regard to the origin of the Chalukyas. The view of Dr. V.A. Smith was that the Chalukyas were connected with the Chapas and so with the foreign Gurjara tribe of which the Chapas were a branch and they migrated to Rajputana from the Deccan. This view is rejected by Dr. D.C. Sircar who is of the view that the Chalukyas represented an indigenous Kanarese family that claimed the status of Kshatriyas.

*Early Western Chalukyas of Badami.* The Chalukya power had a modest beginning under Jayasimha and his son Ranaraga. The latter was succeeded by Pulakesin I who ruled from about 535 to 566 A.D. He was the first Maharaja in his family and he can be called the real founder of the dynasty. He performed various sacrifices such as Hiranyagarbha, Asvamedha, etc. He laid the foundations of the fort of Vatapi. He ruled over the present Bijapur district with his capital at Badami.

*Kirtivarman I.* Pulakesin I was succeeded by his son Kirtivarman in about 567 A.D. He is stated to have defeated the rulers of Vanga, Anga, Kalinga, Vattura, Magadha, Madraka, Kerala, Ganga, Mushaka, Pandya, Dramila, Choliya, Aluka and Vijjanti. He is also described as "Night of destruction" to the Nalas, Mauryas and Kadambas. He is also stated to have broken up a confederacy of the Kadamba kings.

*Mangalesa.* Kirtivarman I was succeeded by his brother Mangalesa in about 598 A.D. His greatest achievements were his victory over the Kalachuris and the conquest of Revatidvipa. The Kalachuri ruler was defeated in 602 A.D. and his entire possessions were appropriated. The struggle between the Kalachuris and the Chalukyas seems to have continued for many years after which Mangalesa came into complete possession of the Central and Northern Maratha country.

There was a civil war between Mangalesa and his nephew Pulakesin II who was the son of Kirtivarman I. In that war, Mangalesa lost his life and Pulakesin II became the king.

*Pulakesin II (610—642 A.D.).* Pulakesin II was the greatest king of the Chalukya dynasty. He ruled from 610-11 A.D. to 642 A.D. He is known by various names such as Vallabha, Prithvi-Vallabh, Sri Prithvi-Vallabh, Paramesvara and Parama-bhagavata.

The throne inherited by Pulakesin II was not a bed of roses. On account of the civil war between Mangalesa and Pulakesin II, the various parts of Chalukya empire declared their independence. Even the home provinces were attacked. Pulakesin II was faced with a two-fold task of meeting the foreign invasion and subduing the rebellious subordinates. By following a policy of dividing his enemies, he was successful in his work.

Pulakesin II besieged and reduced Vanavasi, the capital of the Kadambas. The Gangas of South Mysore and the Alupas were compelled to submit. The Ganga king married one of his daughters to Pulakesin II. The Mauryas of Konkan were invaded and defeated. The Latas, Malavas and Gurjaras were also forced to submit. The country thus conquered brought Pulakesin II into contact with King Harsha of Kanauj. In 636 A.D., Harsha invaded Kathiawad. Pulakesin II created a confederacy and was thus able to defeat Harsha in 637-638 A.D. It is rightly pointed out that "the struggle between the kings of Madhyadesa and Dakshinapatha apparently ensued from the attempts of both to extend their power over the present Gujarat region of the Aparanta division of India."

The fortress of Pishtapur and another fort on the island in the Kunala were captured. The ruler of Pishtapur was deposed and Pulakesin II put his younger brother in charge of the new territory. It was under these circumstances that the dynasty of the Eastern Chalukyas was founded which continued upto 1070 A.D.

Pulakesin II defeated the Pallava king, Mahendra-Varman I and the latter was forced to take shelter behind the ramparts of Kanchi, his capital. After that, Pulakesin II crossed the Kaveri river and made friends with the Cholas, Keralas and Pandyas. After completing the Dig-vijay, Pulakesin II went back to Vatapi.

It is true that the Pallavas had been defeated but they had not been completely crushed. They decided to have revenge for Pulakesin's attack on their capital. They attacked Badami and captured it. The Pallava king defeated Pulakesin II many a time. According to one record, he wrote the word victory on the back of Pulakesin II which was turned in flight, as upon a plate. He savagely destroyed Vatapi and put its inhabitants to the sword. Pulakesin II appears to have been killed in the battle. After his death, the Chalukya empire began to crumble. Pulakesin II was undoubtedly one of the greatest monarchs of ancient India.

It appears that after the death of Pulakesin II, Badami and some of the Southern Districts remained in the hands of the Pallavas for many years. Many attempts were made to drive out the



invaders but those attempts failed on account of the dissensions among the sons of Pulakesin II. The Chalukya throne remained vacant from 642 to 655 A.D. There were many claimants to the Chalukya throne and ultimately Vikramaditya I succeeded in recovering Badami from the Pallavas and thereby seated himself on the throne of his father. It appears that the sons of Pulakesin II did not receive any help from the Eastern Chalukyas.

Vikramaditya I ruled from 655 to 681 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Vinayaditya who ruled from 681 to 696 A.D. He was succeeded by Vijayaditya who ruled from 696 to 733 A.D. He had to fight against the Pallavas and he is said to have conquered Kanchi and levelled the city from the Pallavarner. The next ruler was Vikramaditya II who ruled from 734 to 745 A.D. Hostilities continued with the Pallavas during his reign. Although he entered Kanchi, he did not destroy it. He is also said to have destroyed the power of the Chola, Kerala, Panjva, Kumbhara and other kings. He set up a pillar of victory on the shores of the Southern Ocean. He was succeeded by his son Kirtivarman II who ruled from 746 to 757 A.D. He was the last of the glorious Chalukya race. After 50 years, the Chalukya power was completely eclipsed by the Rashtrakutas. Dantidurga, the Rashtrakuta king, defeated Kirtivarman II and finished the Chalukya power.

*Later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani.* The founder of the later Western Chalukya dynasty was Taila or Tailapa II. He reigned for 24 years from 973 to 997 A.D. He is stated to have conquered Chedi, Orissa or Nepal and Kuntala. He was succeeded by Satyasraya. He won a victory against the Cholas. The successors of Satyasraya were Dasavarman, Vikramaditya V, Jayasimha I and Jagadekamalla. The next ruler was Someshvara I. He ascended the throne in 1042 A.D. He continued the struggle against the Cholas but he was defeated by Rajendra Chola. He suffered another defeat at the hands of Rajendra II, the Chola king. The next ruler was Somesvara II. His brother is stated to have captured Gangaikonda-Cholapuram from the Cholas, Vengi, the capital of the Eastern Chalukyas and Chakravotra, a fortress of the Paramaras. He was succeeded by Vikramaditya VI. He started a new era known as Chalukya Vikramakala beginning from 1076 A.D. He ruled for about 50 years. He was succeeded by Somesvara III. The next ruler was Jagadekamalla II who ruled from 1135 to 1151 A.D. After his death, Taila III came to the throne. He ruled from 1150 to 1163 A.D. The Yadavas of Devagiri and Hoyasalas under Vira Ballala I attacked the Chalukyas. It was under these circumstances that the later Western Chalukya dynasty came to an end in about 1190 A.D.

*The Eastern Chalukyas.* The founder of the Eastern Chalukya dynasty was Visnuvardhana, a brother of Pulakesin II. His capital was at Vengi. He ruled from 615 to 633 A.D. He was succeeded by Jayasimha I who ruled from about 633 to 653 A.D. He was succeeded by Indravarman. After his brief rule, he was succeeded by Visnuvardhana II. The latter was succeeded by Mangi-Yuvara

who ruled from about 672 to 696 A.D. The next ruler was Jayasimha II. He ruled from about 696 to 709 A.D. Vishnuvardhana III ruled from 709 to 746 A.D. He annexed Madhyama Kamma. He was succeeded by Vijayaditya I who ruled from about 746 to 764 A.D. It was during his reign that the Western Chalukyas of Badami were overthrown by the Rashtrakutas.

The next important ruler was Vijayaditya II who ruled from 799 to 843 A.D. He was surrounded by enemies on all sides. He was succeeded by Vijayaditya III who ruled from 844 to 888 A.D. He defeated Krishna II, the Rashtrakuta ruler, and destroyed his capital. He also defeated the Gangas. He was killed in the battle-field. Bhima ruled from 888 to 918 A.D. The next important ruler was Vijayaditya VI, who ruled from 948 to 970 A.D. Shaktivarman ruled from 1003 to 1015 A.D. Vishnuvardhana VIII ruled from 1022 to 1063 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Kulottunga Chola. He ruled from 1063 to 1118 A.D. The new king was more Chola than Chalukya in blood on account of inter-marriages for three generations. He preferred the Chola throne to the Chalukya throne which he left to the care of his uncle Vijayaditya VII who was the Viceroy of Vengi.

*The Deccan under the Chalukyas.* The Chalukyas were the followers of Brahmanical religion and no wonder Buddhism began to decline. However, they followed a policy of religious toleration. During their ascendancy, Jainism prospered in the Deccan. Ravikirti, the Jain author of the Aihole inscription, claims to have received "the highest favour" from Pulakesin II. Likewise, Vijayaditya and Vikramaditya granted villages to well-known Jain scholars. There is nothing to show that Buddhism was also patronised by the Chalukya rulers. Buddhism might have been on the wane but it had not become extinct. This is clear from the following statement of Hiuen Tsang: "Of Buddhist monasteries, there were about 100, and the Brethren who were adherents of Both Vehicles, were more than 5,000 in number. Within and outside the capital were five Asoka topes where the four Past Buddhas had sat and walked for exercise; and there were innumerable other topes of stone or brick."

As regards Brahmanism, the Pauranic deities rose into prominence. Superb structures were set up at Vatapi or Badami and Pattadakal (Bijapur District) in honour of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. These gods were also known by a variety of names. The official form of worship received special attention. Many dances on the sacrificial form of worship were composed. Pulakesin I alone is stated to have performed a number of sacrifices such as the Asvamedha, Vajapeya, Paundarika etc. sacrifices.

Art made great progress under the patronage of Chalukya kings. A new style of architecture known as the Chalukya style which was different from the Gupta style, was developed during this period. At Aihole alone, we come across 70 temples. In

addition to Aihole, there were temples at Badami and Pattadakal. Aihole has rightly been called "the cradle of Indian temple architecture." It represents the best of Chalukyan architecture. Three temples at Aihole are particularly famous and their names are the Ladh Khan Temple, the Durga Temple and Hucchimalligudi Temple. The Ladh Khan Temple has certain characteristics of rock-cut halls. As a matter of fact, it has a low flat roofed mandapa, 50 feet wide and enclosed by walls on three sides, with a porch on the east side, the pillars of which are carved with Ganga-Yamuna motif. "Architecturally, the temple is significant for two main reasons. We see in the pilasters at the exterior angles of the structure the beginnings of the later Dravidian order with the tapering upper end of the shaft and a capital with the expanded abacus supporting the bracket. Another feature which stayed on and influenced later Chalukyan temples is the flat roof which consists of stone slabs grooved at the joints and held together by long narrow stones which fit into the grooves." The Durga Temple contains a new feature, namely, a vestibule or antarala which is an intermediate chamber between the cella and the main hall. It has a Sikhara over the Garbhagriha which has fallen. The Hucchimalligudi temple seems to be the earliest of the Aihole group and it contains a Sikhara of the Nagara type.

It was during the seventh century A. D. that the movement of rock-cut halls was initiated. There are as many as 10 temples at Pattadakal belonging to this period. Six of them follow the Dravidian style. The temple of Virupaksha is the most important one. It was built by Lokamahadevi, the queen of Vikramaditya II. It has many features similar to those of the Kailashnath temple at Kanchi. According to Percy Brown, there is a bold beauty in the appearance of the Virupaksha temple as a whole which is best seen in the exterior. It is a comprehensive scheme as it consists not only of the central structure, but of a detached Nandi pavilion in front and it is contained within a walled enclosure entered by an appropriate gateway. The main building is 120 feet. The mouldings, the pilasters, brackets and cornices and the perforated windows are important. The exterior body of the temple consists of niches in which are kept life-size statues. The temple has a square Sikhara. It is one of those buildings of the past in which the spirit still lingers of the men who conceived it and wrought it with their hands.

One of the achievements of the Chalukya art was the building of excavated cave temples of Hindu gods. Mangalesa, the early Chalukya king of Badami, got excavated at Badami a beautiful cave temple of Siva. Both Ajanta and Ellora were situated in the dominions of the Chalukyas. A record of Pulakesin II is to be found in a fragmentary painting in the first monastic hall at Ajanta representing the reception of a Persian embassy. In addition to the painted hall, the Ajanta caves have a number of Chaitya halls. Some of them were probably executed in the time of the early Western Chalukyas.

We have many buildings of stones finely joined without mortar belonging to the Chalukya period. The stone temple of Siva at Meguti shows the art of stone building in its perfection. This was erected in about 634 A D. It has the Prasasti on Pulakesin II written by Ravi Kirti. The Vishnu temple at Athole is in a very good condition. It has inscription of Vikramaditya II. The temple is built in stone on a rock in the Buddhist Chaitya hall style. There are wonderful sculptures on it. The two high-flying Devas are excellent in design and execution. The Chaitya-cell is placed in a pillar hall with a Pradakshinapatha round the shrine.

Vijayaditya (696-733 A D) built the magnificent temple of Siva under the name of Vijayasvara now called Sangamesvara at Pattadakal in Bijapur District. His sister built a Jain temple called Anesejjeya-basadi at Lakshmeswar.

The wife of Vikramaditya II built the great temple of Siva under the name of Lokesvara now called Virupaksha at Pattadakal. As regards the plan of this temple, in front of the Antarala or the hall of the priests, there is a pillared Mandapam or the meeting place of the people, about 50 feet square. The roof is supported by 16 monolithic pillars with sculptural bracket capitals. The enclosing walls on each side are pierced by four windows. According to Havell, the great art critic, the temple "combines the stateliness of the classic design of Europe with fervid imagination of Gothic art." Another queen of Vikramaditya II constructed another great temple of Siva under the name of Trailokyasvara in the vicinity of the Lokesvara or Virupaksha temple.

### *Suggested Readings*

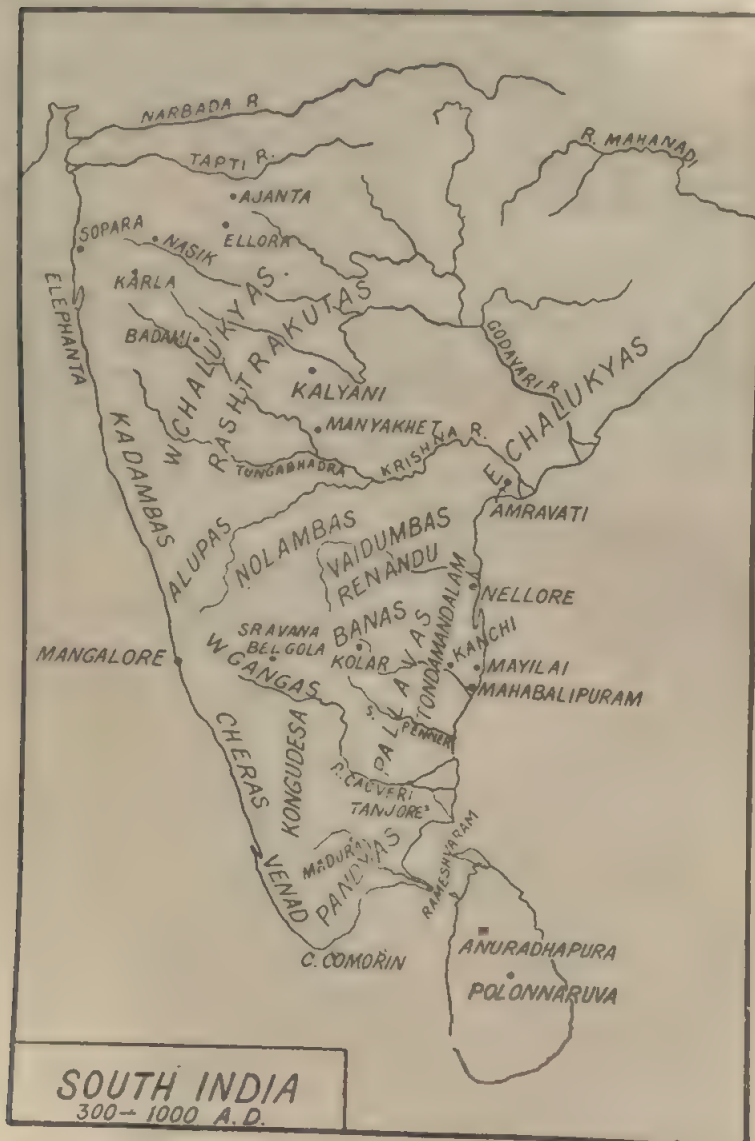
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## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE PALLAVAS

It is true that the origin of the Pallavas has been discussed by scholars for more than half a century, but unfortunately no



unanimity of opinion has been arrived at. Prof. Rao, the latest writer on the subject, has been forced to admit that "the origin of the Pallavas has remained till now a mystery."

According to Dr. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, "We do not meet with the form Pahlava in connection with the Pallavas of Kanchi in any record of their time...The word as applied to Pallavas in the first instance seems to be a translation of the Tamil word Tondaiyar and Tondaman and this finds confirmation in some of the copper plate charters which do bring in tender twigs of some kind in connection with the eponymous name Pallava. This undoubtedly is a later use of the term but gives the indication that even at that comparatively late period the traditional notion was that they were not foreigners such as the Pahlavas would have been. In all the material that has been examined there is nothing to indicate either the migration of the people or even of a family that might have ultimately raised itself into a dynasty from the northwest, so that the assumption of a connection between the one set of people and the other rests upon the mere doubtful ground of a possibility whereas the translation or adaptation of a southern word in Sanskrit is very much more than a possibility as indeed a word like Dravida or Dramida would clearly indicate."

According to Prof. R. Sathainathaier, scholars have wandered from Persia to Ceylon in search of the original home of the Pallavas of Kanchi, but in his opinion they originated in Tondamandalam itself. It was a province in the Empire of Asoka. The Pulindas were perhaps identical with the Kurumbas of Tondamandalam. Tondaiyar is a Tamil rendering of Pallavas. The Satavahanas conquered Tondamandalam and Pallavas became feudatory to the Satavahanas. After the collapse of the Satavahana Empire about A.D. 225, the Pallavas became independent. Their expansion from Kanchi to the Krishna is proved by the Mayidavolu and Hirahadagalli Prakrit copper-plate grants of Sivaskanda-varman Pallava. The theory of the Tondamandalam origin of the Pallavas of Kanchi best explains the historical facts relating to the problem of the origin.

The Prakrit charters mention several kings including *Sivaskanda-varman* who ruled probably about the beginning of the fourth century A.D. He was probably the greatest of the early Pallavas and his dominion extended from the Krishna to South Penner and the Bellary District. He performed sacrifices like the Asvamedha.

*Vishnugopa* was another king of the Pallava dynasty. He was one of the twelve kings of Dakshinapatha defeated by Samudragupta. There is no truth in the view that Samudragupta was defeated by Vishnugopa in league with other princes. The period A.D. 350—375 is assigned to Vishnugopa. Hastivarman of Vengi, a contemporary of Vishnugopa, probably belonged to the Pallava dynasty. The name of another Pallava king of Kanchi was *Simhavarmān* who ascended the throne about A.D. 436. He was a Buddhist.

*Simhavishnu Avanisimha* (Lion of the Earth) ascended the throne in about 575 A.D. It was during his reign that the Pallavas started on their career of political and cultural achievements. He is

credited with the conquest of Chola-mandalam. He also defeated a number of enemies including the Kalabhras. He was a patron of Bharavi, the author of Kiratarjuniya. At Mahabalipuram are found the relief of Simhavishnu and his two queens. He is also stated to have defeated the kings of Ceylon and three Tamil states.

Simhavishnu was succeeded by his son, *Mahendra-varman*. He ruled from about 600 to 630 A.D. He had a passion for titles and some of those titles were Chetthakari (temple builder), Chitrakrapuli (tiger among painters), Mattavilasa (addicted to enjoyment) and Vichitrachitta (myriad-minded). To begin with, Mahendra-varman was Jain but later on he became a follower of Siva. He was a great builder and he excavated many rock-cut temples in the Trichinopoly, Chingleput and North and South Arcot districts. He also built temples in honour of Brahma, Isvara and Vishnu. He built the reservoir known as the Mohindra Tank near the city of Mohindravadi. A cave temple of Vishnu still exists on the bank of the tank. His Mandagapattu inscription runs thus : "This brickless, timberless, metalless, and mortarless temple which is a mansion for Brahma, Isvara and Vishnu, was caused to be created by the king Vichitrachitta." Mahendra-varman was not only a patron of art but was also himself the author of a book on music. The Mattavilasa-prahasana of Mahendra-varman is a farce. It ridicules the foibles and follies of Saiva and Buddhist ascetics.

Mahendra-varman suffered many defeats at the hands of Pulakesin II and had to give to the conqueror the territory of Vengi over which Pulakesin set his brother Vishnuvardhan. The Aihole inscription says that Pulakesin II "caused the splendours of the lord of the Pallavas... to be obscured by the dust of his army and to vanish behind the walls of Kanchipura."

Mahendra-varman was succeeded by his son, *Narasimha-varman I*. The latter ruled from about 630 to 668 A.D. He was probably the greatest of the Pallava rulers. His achievements were so great that he became supreme in the whole of South India. He defeated Pulakesin II in three battles. He was successful in capturing Vatapi, the capital of Pulakesin II. The latter was himself killed. During the confusion prevailing in the Chalukya kingdom after the death of Pulakesin II, Narsimha-varman continued to occupy the Southern part of the Chalukya kingdom. He also took up the titles of Mahamalla and Vatapikonda or captor of Vatapi.

Narsimhavarman I also sent a naval expedition to Ceylon and he was completely successful in his mission. The details of this campaign are given in the Mahavamsa.

It was during the reign of Narsimhavarman I that the Pallava kingdom was visited by Hsuen Tsang. He has given us an interesting description of that kingdom. According to him, Kanchi was about 6 miles in circumference. There were more than one hundred monasteries of the Buddhists and more than 10,000 monks lived there. There were 80 non-Buddhist temples and most of them belonged to the Jains. The people loved learning. There was a large monastery near the capital where the most learned men of the

country met. That was probably the Raja-vihara. The circumference of the Pallava kingdom was 1,000 miles. The soil of the country was fertile and the same was well-cultivated. There was an abundance of production. Hiuen Tsang says that Dharma Pala of the Nalanda University belonged to Kanchi.

Narsimha-varman built a sea-beach town near Kanchi and gave it the name of Mahamallapuram (Mahabalipuram). There are a large number of monolithic temples in that town. Most probably, many of those temples including the Dharmaraja Ratha, were built by him.

Narsimha-varman was succeeded by his son *Mahendra-varman II*. He ruled for about 2 years from about 668 to 670 A.D. There is no important event of his reign. He was succeeded by his son, *Paramesvara-varman I* who ruled from about 670 to about 695 A.D. The old dispute with the Chalukyas started once again. The Chalukyas under Vikramaditya I were successful against the Pallavas. They were able to capture Kanchi. The Pallavas got a great set-back. It is to be noted that the Chalukya claim to victory is disputed in the Pallava record where it is stated that the Pallavas were victorious over the Chalukyas.

Paramesvara-varman was a follower of Siva. He built a temple near Kanchi dedicated to that god. He also added to the edifices at Mahabalipuram.

*Narsimha-varman II* succeeded his father Paramesvara-varman. He ruled from about 695 to about 722 A.D. He took up the titles of Rajasimha (lion among kings), Agamapriya (lover of scriptures) and Sankarabhakta (devotee of Siva). He had a peaceful reign. He built the Kailashnath temple at Kanchi. Probably Dandin, the great writer of Sanskrit, was his court poet. Narsimha-varman sent an embassy to China. He was succeeded by his son *Paramesvara-varman II*. The latter ruled from about 722 to about 730 A.D. He had to face a Chalukya invasion led by Yuvaraja Vikramaditya II.

*Nandi-varman II* was the next important ruler of the Pallava dynasty. He ruled from about 730 to about 800 A.D. During his reign, the struggle between the Pallavas and the Chalukyas started once again. Vikramaditya II was able to capture Kanchi but the same was recovered by the Pallavas. Nandi-varman had also to fight against the Pandyas and Rashtrakutas. Nandi-varman is credited with the conquest of a part of Eastern Chalukya territory. It is true that Dantidurga, the Rashtrakuta king, was able to capture Kanchi, but he ultimately married his daughter to Nandi-varman.

Nandi-varman was a follower of Vishnu. He built the Muktesvara temple at Kanchi. Some other temples were also built by him. Probably he also performed an Ashvamedha sacrifice.

Nandi-varman was succeeded by his son *Danti-varman*. There were many other successors and the last of them was Aparajita Pallava. The latter defeated the Pandya king, Varaguna II, in the



battle of Sri-Purambitam. However, he himself was defeated by Aditya Chola towards the end of 9th century. From that time onward the Cholas became supreme and the Pallavas went into the background.

During the period of decline, the Pallavas had to fight against the Rastakutas. Govinda III levied tribute from the Pallavas. There were also wars between the Pallavas and the Gangas.

The latter Pallava kings sank into the position of mere feudatory nobles and officials in the service of others. It is stated that the Pallava Rulers took the first place among the feudatories of king Vikram Chola early in the 12th century. The Pallava Chiefs can be traced down to the 13th century.

The rule of the Pallavas was remarkable in many ways. There was a lot of literary activity during that period. The Pallava rulers were great patrons of learning. Dandin was the court-poet of Narasimhavarman II. Excepting a few inscriptions at the beginning, the rest of the inscriptions of the Pallavas were written in Sanskrit. Kanchi was the seat of Sanskrit learning in the South. The Brahmans paid special attention to the study of Sanskrit. The works of Kaṇḍaśa, Bhāṣa and Varaha-mihara were well-known in the country. A provision was made for the recitation of the Mahabharata in a Mandapa at Kurram near Kanchi. At that place, there were 108 families which were completely devoted to the study of the Vedas. The royal patronage was extended also to the classics in Tamil. The *Tamil Kural* of Triavalluvar was a work of great learning. *Matta Vilasa Prahasana*, a social comedy, was written by Mahendravarman who was father of Narasimha Pallava.

The great religious reform which swept India in the 8th century first originated in the Pallava kingdom. The Vaishnava and Saiva literature of the Tamils mainly developed during this period. The Saiva and Vaishnava saints whose lives and works dominate the religion of the South, seem to have lived during the Pallava Period. Sundarar, the last of the Saiva saints, lived in the closing years of the Pallava rule. The Jain and Buddhist teachers slowly lost their ground. The Pallavas were orthodox Hindus. They were generally the followers of Vishnu but sometimes they were the devotees of Siva. It is they who laid the foundations of the great reformation which took place in the 8th century. The Aryanisation of South India was completed during the Pallava period. The grants of the Pallavas show that the Aryan structure of society had gained firm hold on the South by the end of the 6th century. The Dharmasutras had gained authority in the Pallava territory. The University of Kanchi must have played an important part in this connection. Kanchi was the greatest centre of education in the South. Vatsyayana, author of *Nyayabhasya*, was a Pandit of Kanchi. Dinnaga is also said to have got his training at Kanchi. It is stated that Mayuravarman of the Kadamba family went to Kanchi for higher studies. It was from Kanchi that the Sanskritisation of the South and the Indian colonies in the Far East proceeded.

The Pallavas were a great maritime power. Their activities on the sea were mainly directed towards maintaining friendly contacts with the Indian States in Further India, Malaya and Indonesia.

### **Pallava Art and Architecture**

According to Prof. Percy Brown, "Of all the great powers that together made the history of Southern India, none had a more marked effect on the architecture of their realm than the earliest of all, that of the Pallavas, whose productions provided the foundations of the Dravidian style."

The temple architecture of the Pallavas can be divided into two categories, viz. rock-cut and structural. Rock-cut temples can be divided into two groups : excavated pillared halls and monolithic shrines known as Rathas.

Mahendravarman I laid the foundation stone of Mahabalipuram's grandeur and reputation by starting the technique of excavating stone temples out of solid rocks. By doing so, he made it "the birth-place of South Indian architecture and sculpture." The excavated shrines of Mahendravarman are simple pillared halls cut into the back or side walls.

The important feature of the Mandapa is the row of pillars with octagonal shafts, plain and heavy brackets, sometimes with horizontal flutings. Of the sculptures, mention may be made of Dwarapalakas.

Narsimhavarman I was responsible for "a new and more ornate series of cut-in cave temples, cut-out shrines (Vimanas or Rathas) and some open air bas relief compositions of considerable size." At Mahabalipuram, there are ten Mandapas of which the important ones are Varaha, the Trimurti, the Mahisasuramardini and Panch Pandava Mandapas. These Mandapas are modest structures with the following dimensions—facade 25 feet wide, from 15 to 20 feet high, with a depth of 255 feet ; pillars 9 ft. high and 1.2 ft. wide diameter, cellas rectangular and from 5-10 ft. side. Pillars are the main feature of the facade. They are more ornamental, slender and taller than those set up by Mahendravarman. According to Percy Brown, "The capitals contain all the members mounted on the top of the shaft such as Kalasa, Tadi Kumbha, Padma and Phalaka, the latter being omitted in some cases. The bases of the pillars are often found shaped into squatting Vyalas and lions. The shrine-cells in all cases well projected into the mandapa have all the Angas of a Vimana front, viz. moulded adishthana, pilasters or Kudya-stambhas with capital components, Prastara with Kapota and Kudu-arches ; the further super-structure is not shown in the interior aspect of the Mandapa. There are two remarkable panels in Mahisasura Mandapa." The one represents Vishnu sleeping on Seshanag and that is simple and impressive. The fight of Durga or Devi against Mahisasura is impressive and remarkable.

Narsimhavarman was responsible for carving in stone of real shrines known as Rathas or the seven Pagodas. Their number is eight, but important of them are those five which are situated to the south of the rocky hill and they are called after the names of Darupadi, Arjuna, Bhima, Dharamaraja and Sahadeva. The other three Rathas are situated to the north and north-west of the hill and are known as Ganesha, Pindari and Valaiyan-Kuttai. The first four Rathas of the Southern group are carved out of a high rock. They are all square and long in plan and pyramidal in elevation. They are of different sizes, the largest measuring 42 feet long, the widest 35 feet and the tallest 40 feet high. The largest and the most complete of them, namely the Dharamaraja Ratha, combines the characteristic features of the Pallava temple, the pillars in the portico with rampant lions, the pyramidal tower and turreted roof. The Bhima, Ganesh and Sahadeva Rathas are oblong in plan and are based on the architecture of the Chaitya hall. Two are three storeys high; they are surmounted by a barrel roof with the Chaitya gable at the ends. In this multi-storeyed structure with its barrel roof, we see the beginnings of the great Dravidian gopurams which were to develop nearly six centuries later.

The Arjuna's Penance or the "Descent of the Ganga" is remarkable in many ways. There is a crevice between the two boulders representing a river where a band of Nagas and Naginis are carved. According to H. Heras, "Two Nagas are joyfully playing with the water in middle of the stream ; here a Brahmana goes back home with a large pot of water on one of his shoulders ; there a deer is approaching the stream to appease its thirst. Above two swans are in pose to plunge into the water ; below numerous ascetics are performing their penances round a small shrine. On the other side of the river, a cat, wishing to imitate those ascetics, takes up the same posture of penance by lifting its whole body on its hind legs and raising its front paws above his head. In the meantime the little mice of the forest, on seeing their enemy in such an ascetic, harmless posture, run about fearlessly here and there and even seem daring enough to worship him as their god." According to Grousset, "What we have before us here is a vast picture, a regular fresco in stone. This relief is a masterpiece of classic art in the breadth of its composition, the sincerity of its impulse which draws all creatures together round the beneficent waters and its deep, fresh love of nature."

Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha substituted bricks and timber for stone in the temples. Six temples belong to this period but important among them are the Kailasanatha and Vaikunta Perumal temples at Kanchi and the Shore temple at Mahabalipuram. The Kailasanatha temple is the largest among the Pallava temples. Its main features are the pyramidal tower, the flat roofed pillared hall, the vestibule and the rampart lion pilaster. The view of Percy Brown is that this temple is well-proportioned, substantial and rhythmic in its mass and elegant in its outlines. The Vaikunta Perumal temple is slightly larger than the Kailasanatha temple

and is the most mature example of the Pallava temples complex. The sanctum is square with nearly 90 feet side. Its front is carried forward 28 feet on the eastern side to provide a portico, which is square in plan with 12½ feet side. Its Vimana is square in plan and has a height of 60 feet from the ground. "It is in four storeys, each with a passage round its exterior, a cella in the centre, and a corridor encircling two of these for circumambulation." The architecture of the Shore temple conforms to the Dharamaraja Ratha in principle. The cellas of this temple face east "so that the shrine may be illuminated by the first rays of the sun as well as being plainly observable to those approaching the harbour in ships." Two additional shrines are attached to the western end of the main shrine. One shrine has a smaller Vimana. "The structure of the tapering Vimana which is light, elegant and rhythmic in proportion is an improvement on the earliest Buddhist Vihara."

The Mukteswara and Matungeswara temple at Kanchi, the Vedamallisvara temple at Oragadam, the Virattaneswara temple at Tiruttani and Perasurameswara temple at Gudimallam belong to that period of the Pallavas when their power was declining. These temples are merely copies of the earlier temples and are not remarkable in any way.

It cannot be denied that the credit of initiating a movement in temple architecture belongs to the Pallavas. The Rathas and the Shore temple at Mahabalipuram rank high among the best specimens of ancient Indian architecture.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE CHOLAS

The Chola kingdom was a very ancient one. There is a reference to the Cholas in the Mahabharata. They are also mentioned in the account of Megasthenes and the inscriptions of Asoka. Katyayana also refers to the Cholas. The Mahavamsa refers to the relations between the Cholas and the rulers of Ceylon. Ptolemy also refers to the Cholas. The Sangam literature refers to many Chola princes who were models of justice. The Periplus gives us information about the ports and inland towns of the Chola territory. The kingdom of the Cholas included Madras, several other districts and the greater part of the Mysore State.

*Karikala.* The Cholas gained in territory and influence in the reign of *Karikala* who ruled in the 2nd century A.D. He defeated a combination of the Pandyas and Keralas (Cheras). He made peace by marrying his daughter to the Kerala prince. He invaded Ceylon and brought from there 12,000 labourers to work for his irrigation works on the Kaveri.

*Nedumudikilli.* *Karikala* was succeeded by his grand-son named *Nedumudikilli*. During his reign, the capital of the Cholas was destroyed by the sea-pirates. This must have given a set-back to the empire. The attacks of the Pallavas, Keralas and Pandyas also must have weakened the Cholas. When the Pallava monarchy declined about the middle of the 9th century A.D., the sun of Chola glory began to shine once again. The decline of the Pandyas in the 8th century A.D. also must have helped the rise of the Cholas.

*Vijayalaya.* The greatness of the Cholas was revived by the dynasty founded by *Vijayalaya*. He began his rule shortly before 850 A.D. probably as a vassal of the Pallava king. When the Pallavas and the Pandyas were at war, he occupied Tanjore and made it his capital.

*Aditya I.* *Vijayalaya* was succeeded by his son *Aditya I* in 880 A.D. He considerably enhanced the power and prestige of the family. He defeated the Pallava king, *Aparajita*, conquered his kingdom and further strengthened his position. He defeated *Parantaka Viranarayana* and annexed the Kongu country.

*Parantaka I.* *Aditya I* was succeeded by his son *Parantaka I*. He ruled from 907 to 955 A.D. He was the real founder of the Chola supremacy in Southern India. He annexed the territories of the *Pandya* king who ran away to Ceylon for safety.

*Parantaka* "uprooted two Bana kings and conquered the *Vaidumbas*." He swept away all traces of Pallava power and pushed

his authority up to Nellore in the North. Towards the end of his reign, Parantaka was involved in a terrible conflict with Krishna III, the Rashtrakuta king. Although some late Chola inscriptions credit Parantaka with having repulsed his mighty rival, a consideration of the available evidence shows that Krishna won a decisive victory over the Chola forces with the help of the Ganga prince. Undoubtedly, the Cholas received a set-back at the hands of the Rashtrakutas.

The inscriptions of Parantaka throw light on the self-governing village communities under the Chola administration such as those of Uttaramallur. Parantaka was a patron of learning. Venkata Madhava, one of the earliest commentators of the Rigveda, flourished in the time of Parantaka. Parantaka constructed a temple at Tondaimand in honour of his father.

**Rajaraja, the Great.** The most powerful ruler of the Chola kingdom was Rajaraja, the Great, who ruled from 985 to 1014 A.D. His early titles were Rajakesari Arumoli and Mummadi Chola. The inscriptions of Rajaraja range from his second to the thirty-first regnal years.

The first great triumph of Rajaraja was achieved early in his reign when he destroyed the Chera Navy at Trivandrum. He next conquered Madura and captured Amarabhujanga Pandya. He turned his attention to Kudamalaiadu or Coorg and got into possession of the stronghold of Udagai in order to check the power of the Pandyas and Cheras. He annexed the Northern part of Ceylon to his kingdom. Its king Mahendra V took shelter in the south-east of the island. Rajaraja sacked Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa was made the capital of the Chola province of Ceylon. He built there a substantial stone temple, the Siva Devale.

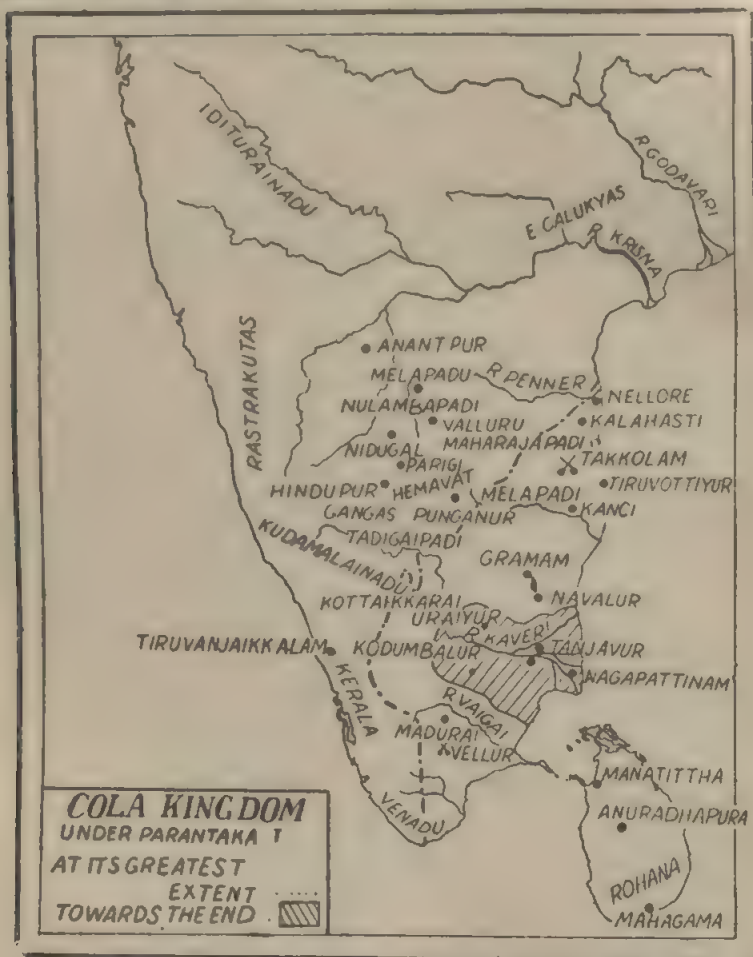
Gangavadi, Tadigaivadi and Nolambavadi were the political divisions of the Western Ganga country. Rajaraja conquered them all in about 991 A.D. and they remained a part of the Chola empire for a century and a quarter.

The Chola army invaded the kingdom of the Western Chalukyas and ravaged it so mercilessly that even Brahmans and children were not spared. Even women were dishonoured. However, the Chalukya ruler succeeded in recovering his position and the Cholas were confined to the south of the Tungabhadra.

Rajaraja also interfered in the affairs of the Eastern Chalukyas. He helped Saktivarman to secure the throne. This was done in order to frustrate the plan of combining the resources of the Western and Eastern Chalukyas against the Cholas. Rajaraja's daughter was married to the younger brother of Saktivarman. Ultimately, this marriage paved the way for the union of the Cholas and the Chalukyas.

Rajaraja conquered Kalinga. He also conquered the Maladive Islands, "the 12000 Ancient Islands" of the inscription. His empire included the whole of South India up to the Tungabhadra, the

Maladives and a part of Ceylon. The Andhradesa was in feudatory alliance with him.



Rajaraja was one of the greatest sovereigns of South India. He was a great conqueror and empire-builder. He was an able administrator. He was a pious and tolerant man. He was a patron of art and letters. Above all, he was a man of amiable personality. He not only conquered vast territories but also saw to it that those were administered efficiently. In 1000 A.D., he started a land survey. He encouraged local self-government throughout his dominions. He introduced the system of associating the Yuvaraja with the administration of the country and this system was followed by his successors. Experience showed that this system had much to commend itself. It prevented struggle for succession. It acquainted the heir-apparent with the affairs of the State. Rajaraja was also responsible for the construction of the Rajarajesvara temple at

Tanjore which was completed in 1010 A.D. He got constructed temples of Vishnu. He co-operated in the construction of the Chudamani Vihara.

Rajaraja was in every way the greatest of the Chola kings. "His singularly blameless career, as king, conqueror and man stamp him as a ruler worthy of highest praise. His love of the system as displayed in his administrative acts mark him out as business-like and gifted personage who tried to avoid mistakes as far as it lay in his power and leave his impress on the history of his country. Among the great works that he undertook and achieved are some which have been found not merely useful to this day to mankind but also are admired by successive generations of men and women, as grand works of art"

*Rajendra I (1012-1044 A.D.)*. Rajaraja, the Great, was succeeded by his son Rajendra I who is also known as Gangaikonda Chola and Uttama Chola. Rajendra I had taken an active part in the affairs of the state as a Crown prince and when he ascended the throne, he proved himself to be a great administrator and warrior.

A few years after coming to the throne, Rajendra annexed the whole of Ceylon. In 1018 A.D., he reasserted the supremacy of the Cholas over the kings of Kerala and Pandya, and appointed his son the Viceroy of those territories. He is stated to have maintained his hold on the "many ancient islands" which had been conquered by his father. He came into conflict with Jayasimha II, the Western Chalukya king. The Chalukya records show that Jayasimha defeated Rajendra I. However, the Tamil Prasasti shows that Jayasimha "turned his back at Musangi and hid himself." Whatever may have been the results of the conflict, Jayasimha continued to be the master of the country up to the Tungabhadra.

Rajendra I entrusted the expedition of Eastern India to his General. The Chola army crossed the Godavari, Bastar and Orissa and reached West Bengal. It defeated two rulers, crossed the Ganges, overthrew another ruler, recrossed that river, triumphed over Mahipala I and returned home. The victorious General got the congratulations of Rajendra I on the banks of the Godavari. Water was brought from the Ganges, and put into the Chola-gangam, the large irrigation tank excavated near the new capital of the Cholas built by Rajendra I. It is contended that the Northern raid was not without some permanent results. It is maintained that the settlement of some South Indian Chiefs in Bengal and Mithila leading to the foundation of the Sena principality of Bengal and the Karnata dynasty of Mithila were due to this invasion. We also have clear evidence of the establishment of Saivism from Northern India in the Tamil country.

Towards the end of his reign, the Cholas were attacked by the Western Chalukyas who were ruled at that time by Somesvara I. Rajadhiraja won a victory at Pundi on the Krishna, sacked Kalyana and brought home the door-keeper image. The Chola invasion was humiliating and ruinous to the Chalukyas. Minor campaigns were conducted in some parts of Mysore. The result was that "cows were



carried off and women's girdles were un-loosed." Historians have condemned the Cholas for their barbarism in war. They had no business to murder children and humiliate women.

Rajendra I founded a new capital at Gangaikonda-Cholapuram with its irrigation system, temple and palace of which the ruins can still be seen. He cultivated friendly relations with the Emperor of China and sent ambassadors in 1016 and 1033 A.D. We are told that Rajendra I made provisions for a Vedic College with 340 students at an important Vaishnava centre. 14 teachers were appointed for that purpose. 45 Velis of land were given for the maintenance of the institution.

Rajendra I has rightly been called the greater son of a great father. He was active for about 32 years in extending the power and prestige of the Chola empire. His important titles were Gangaikonda, Mudikonda, Kadarangonda and Pandita Chola.

*Rajadhiraja I (1044-1052 A.D.).* Rajendra I was succeeded by his son Rajadhiraja I. He subdued the Pandya and Kerala rulers who were in league with the king of Ceylon. Probably, it was with a view to celebrate his victories over his adversaries that Rajadhiraja performed the Asvamedha sacrifice. He also fought against the Western Chalukyas. To begin with, he was successful, but later on he lost his life in the famous battle of Koppam on the Tungabhadra.

*Rajendra II (1052-1064 A.D.).* Rajendra was succeeded by Rajendra II. He continued the struggle against the Chalukyas. Both sides claimed victory for themselves. According to the Chola inscriptions, Rajendra II pressed on to Kohlapur and set up a Jayastambha there. On the other hand, Bilhana, the author of *Vikramankadeva-Charita* represents Somesvar I as one who even stormed Kanchi, an important Chola centre. It appears that none of the contending parties was able to win any decisive victory. However, Rajendra II was able to maintain the Chola empire intact.

*Vira Rajendra (1064-1070 A.D.).* Rajendra II was succeeded by his brother Vira Rajendra. He met the invasion of the Chalukya king across the Tungabhadra and defeated him at Kudal-Samgamam. The Chalukyas attacked again but did not pursue the same. Vira Rajendra built a pillar of victory on the Tungabhadra. An effigy of Somesvara I was set up and Vira Rajendra subjected it to disgrace.

Vira Rajendra directed his attention towards Vengi. He engaged the Western Chalukya forces not far away from modern Bezwada. He crossed the Godavari and over-ran Kalinga and Cakka-Kottam. Vengi was thus re-conquered. Vira Rajendra also curbed the Pandya and Kerala rulers who continued to reassert themselves. He foiled all efforts of Vijayabahu, the ruler of Ceylon, to extend his authority and turn out the Cholas from the island. He is alleged to have sent an expedition against Kadra or Srivijaya, but we do not have many details.

When Somesvara II succeeded in 1068 A.D. to the Chalukya throne, Vira Rajendra made some incursions in the territories of the

Western Chalukyas. However, friendly relations were established between the two kingdoms after some time. Vira Rajendra gave the hand of his daughter to Vikramaditya, the Chalukya prince and promised him all help to regain the Chalukya throne.

*Adhirajendra.* When Vira Rajendra died in 1070 A.D., there was a contest for the throne. Adhirajendra, the heir-apparent, was helped by Vikramaditya VI, the Western Chalukya prince, who was his brother-in-law. He had a short uneventful reign.

*Kulottunga I (1070-1120 A.D.)* Adhirajendra was succeeded by Rajendra II, the Western Chalukya Viceroy of Vengi. He came to the Chola throne as Kulottunga Chola. He had in fact 75 per cent. of Chola blood. In him were united the kingdoms of the Cholas and the Eastern Chalukyas.

*Vikramachola (1120-1135 A.D.)* Kulottunga I was succeeded by his son Vikramachola. He restored the Chola power in the Vengi kingdom. He recovered Kolar and some other parts of Gangavadi. In about 1125 A.D., there were floods and famines in the districts of North and South Arcot. In 1128 A.D., Vikramachola gave handsome donations to the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram. Vikramachola made it a practice to go frequently on the tours of his kingdom. He took up titles of Ahalanka and Tyagasamudra.

Vikramachola was succeeded by his son *Kulottunga II* who ruled from 1135 to 1150 A.D. He gave donations to the Chidambaram temple. It appears that he was intolerant in matters of religion as he ordered the throwing away of the image of Govindaraja into the sea. He and his feudatories patronised Ottakkuttan, Sekkilar and Kamban.

Kulottunga II was succeeded by his son *Rajaraja II* who ruled from 1150 to 1173 A.D. During his reign, the Chola power practically ceased to exist on account of Hoyasala expansion under Vishnuvardhana. Its hold over the Pandya kingdom was already weakened by a civil war.

Rajaraja II was succeeded by *Rajadhiraja II*. He took part in the civil war in the Pandya kingdom and put his nominee Kulasekhara on the Pandya throne. Rajadhiraja II was succeeded by *Kulottunga III*. He also took part in the civil war in the Pandya kingdom. Kulottunga III was succeeded by *Rajadhiraja III*. He ruled from 1206 to 1256 A.D. It was during his reign that the Pandyas sacked Tanjore and made the Chola king their vassal. However, the Chola king recovered his position with the help of Narasimha II, the Hoyasala king. In this way, he arrested the collapse of the Chola empire. In 1232 A.D., Kopperunjinga, a Pallava chief, made the Chola king captive. He was released and reinstated on his throne by his Hoyasala ally. Due to domestic strife and attacks from all sides by the Pandyas, Hoyasalas and Kakatiyas, the Chola power began to decline rapidly. Rajadhiraja III had to share power with Rajendra III who ruled at Tanjore from 1246 to 1267 A.D. In 1243 the *Pallava chief* mentioned above declared his independence.

The Kakatiyas and Hoyasalas partitioned among themselves the territory of the Chola empire and it was thus that the Chola empire ceased to exist.

*Chola Administration.* The Cholas set up a highly efficient system of administration. The empire was divided into provinces called Mandalam. The number of provinces varied. Sometimes their number was 6 and sometimes 8. Each Mandala was divided into a number of Kottams. Each Kottam was subdivided into a number of districts called Nadus. Within the jurisdiction of a Nadu, there were many village unions called Kurrams and Tar-Kurrams which were the units of administration.

The king was the head of the administration. The extent and resources of the Chola empire added to his power and prestige. There was a lot of pomp and show. The Chola kings took up high-sounding titles glorifying their achievements. They maintained large imperial households. They gave big state banquets. They gave a lot of money as donations to temples. The Chola kings started the practice of giving royal names to idols. The images of Chola kings and queens were set up in the temples and were worshipped. The normal rule was hereditary succession to the throne but sometimes the same was changed on account of the seriousness of the administration. The Chola kings had all the powers but their absolutism was tempered both by a ministerial council and organized administrative staff. The heads of the departments were in close contact with the king and were often consulted by him. The officers were paid by land assignments. They were honoured and encouraged by titles. The higher officials enjoyed the status of perundaram and the lower ones sirutaram.

The head of a Mandala, who was the Viceroy, was either a close relation of the king himself or a descendant of its dispossessed royal house. He was in constant communication with the Central Government. He received the orders of the king and also sent a report of what he himself did to the king. He had a large number of officials under him in the work of administration. All records were properly kept.

Public revenue was derived mainly from land and was collected in kind or in cash or in both by the village assemblies. Land was possessed by individuals and communities. There were peasant proprietorships and other forms of land tenure. Special attention was given by the government and local authorities to irrigation. Water was taken from rivers and big tanks. It was one of the duties of the village assemblies to keep the tanks in good condition. In the time of Rajaraja I, the demand of the state was one-third of the gross produce. This share was fixed after an elaborate survey of the land. Such surveys were ordered by Rajaraja I and Kulottunga I. There seems to have been periodical revisions of the classification of land and assessment of land revenue.

The other items of public revenue were customs and tolls, taxes on various kinds of professions, mines, forests, salt-pans etc. The object of these taxes was to supplement the land revenue which was



always varying on account of many factors such as failure of rains, prevalence of famines, etc. Unpaid labour was frequently employed. Kulottunga abolished tolls. There was oppression in some cases. The tax burden of the people must have been increased on account of the emergence of the feudal chiefs. In case land revenue was not paid, the government had the authority to sell the land in question. Even the lands attached to the temples were not spared.

The chief items of public expenditure were the king and his court, civil administrative staff, army and navy, roads, irrigation tanks and channels, donations to temples and other religious endowments.

The Chola kings spent a lot of money on public works. They maintained roads, bridges and ferries. There was an extensive irrigation system. Dams were constructed to divert the water of rivers into smaller channels. Artificial reservoirs, tanks and wells were used for irrigation purposes.

The Cholas maintained a big standing army and a navy. The army consisted of elephants, cavalry and infantry. As many as seventy regiments are mentioned in the Chola inscriptions. The regiments possessed a corporate organisation, participated in civil life and made grants to temples. A lot of care was taken to give them training and discipline. The soldiers were kept in cantonments. The strength of the elephant corps was 60,000 and that of the whole army was about 1,50,000. It was composed chiefly of Kaikkolas or Scengunder. The Velaikkaras were the bodyguard of the king. They had to take a vow to defend the king with their lives. They were ready even to burn themselves on the funeral pyre of the king. Very costly Arabian horses were imported to strengthen the cavalry. However, most of them did not live long on account of the climate of South India. Kings and princes led armies. Rajaditya and Rajadhiraja I died on the battlefields of Takkolam and Koppam.

The commanders enjoyed the ranks of Nayaka, Senapati or Mahadandanayaka. They were Vellalas, Brahmans and others. Sometimes a war started on account of cattle-lifting by some party. Those persons who distinguished themselves in war were given the titles of Kshatriyasikhamani. The Chola kings behaved as barbarians in war. Neither women nor children were spared. Women were dishonoured in a shameless manner. Unspeakable miseries were inflicted on the people by the Cholas. Sometimes, even the sanctity of ambassadors was violated.

The Cholas seem to have possessed a strong navy with whose help they controlled the Coromandel and Malabar coasts. The Bay of Bengal became a Chola lake. Merchant vessels were employed in transporting the army. The Chola naval fights have been described as land battles fought on the decks of ships. It is with the help of this navy that the Chola kings were able to make their conquests in Greater India.

The development of village autonomy was the most unique feature of the Chola administrative system. The village and town



assemblies were primary assemblies and those of Nadus were representative institutions.

The two records of Parantaka I contained resolutions passed by the local Mahasabha on the constitution of Variyams or Executive Committees. Each of the 30 wards of the village was to nominate selected persons possessing certain qualifications. Those qualifications were ownership of more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  Veli of land, residence in a house built on one's own site, age between 35 and 70, knowledge of the Vedic Mantra-Brahmins. In the alternative, one could have  $\frac{1}{4}$  Veli of land and knowledge of one Veda and a Bhashya. The persons excluded were those who had been on any of the Committees for the past three years, those who had been on the Committee but had failed to submit the accounts together with all their specified relations, those who had committed incest or other great sins and those who had stolen the property of others. From among the persons duly nominated, one was to be chosen for each of the 30 Kudumbus or wards by Kudavolai or pot-ticket. Out of these 30 persons, 12 were appointed to the Annual Committee, 12 to the Garden Committee and 6 to the Tank Committee. A Standing Committee and a Gold Committee were also selected. As regards the working of the lot system, the names of the candidates were written on palm-leaf tickets which were put into a pot and shuffled. A young boy was asked to take out as many tickets as there were members to be chosen. The persons whose tickets were picked up by the boy were declared as successful. In some places, there were Committees for Justice, Wards and Fields. The number of Committees and members varied from village to village. The members were paid nothing for their services. The members of the Committee were called Variyapperumakkal. The Mahasabha was called Perunguri and its members were called Perumakkal. Generally, the assembly met in the village temple, but sometimes it met under the shade of a tree or on the bank of a tank.

Village assemblies were entrusted with the entire management of the village. They were practically the absolute proprietors of village lands and were responsible for collection of the total amount of revenue to the government. Village assemblies seem to have exercised exclusive right of administering justice. They practically exercised all the powers of a state within their narrow sphere of activity. They acted as trustees for public charities of all kinds. They received deposits of money, land and paddy on the condition that they provided the things stipulated by the donors. Those functions were the supplying of rice to the god of the temple, supply of paddy to specified persons, maintenance of flower gardens and provision of water and fire pans to Brahmins. The village assembly regulated market and assigned particular places for the sale of particular commodities. It could regularly impose taxes and even levy extra tolls, for specific objects of public utility. It had the power to exact forced labour from the inhabitants of the village.

The garden supervision committee was in charge of keeping roads in order and repair them whenever necessary. The tank super-

vision committee was in charge of constructing the tank and removing silt from it. It had full powers to buy land for purposes of irrigation. It levied taxes for the maintenance of irrigation works.

The village assembly helped the people in time of famine or scarcity. It provided them with means of subsistence. Sometimes, it borrowed from the treasury of the village temple for that purpose. It acted as a trustee of local banks. It was its duty to maintain local religious and charitable institutions. It made provision for education. It protected the village from outside invaders and gave rewards to those who rendered meritorious services by saving the people from them.

The village assemblies possessed practically absolute authority over the affairs of the village and they were generally left undisturbed by the Central Government. The village assemblies were responsible for the payment of taxes due from the village. On one occasion, the members of a village assembly were arrested and imprisoned for the unpaid balance of the royal revenue. It is stated in one inscription that royal officers supervised the accounts of the village assembly from time to time. The village assembly was liable to be fined for its negligence in the performance of its duties. In one case, an assembly was actually fined by the king on the complaint brought up by the temple authorities that it was misappropriating a part of revenues assigned to them. The assembly also could bring to the notice of the king any misdeed of any servant of any temple. Some of the regulations passed by the assembly required the sanction of the king. Capital punishment had to be confirmed by the king. Any royal charter affecting the status of a village had to be sent for approval to the village assembly before it was registered and sent to the record office. It appears that sometimes the members of a village assembly had audience of the king on public business. Sometimes, the king sent his orders to his own officers to the village assembly. There were frequent references to cordial relations between the village assembly and the king. Many inscriptions refer to gifts of land by the village assembly for the sake of the health of the king or for celebrating a royal victory.

*Maritime Commerce and Naval activities.* The Chola kings are famous for the creation of a strong Navy. It was with the help of that Navy that they were able to make conquests overseas. Rajaraja destroyed the fleet of the Cheras at Kandalur and subjugated them. He invaded the island of Ceylon and annexed its northern part which became a Chola province. Rajaraja also conquered the Maladive islands. Rajendra I annexed the whole of Ceylon. He also sent an expedition to Sumatra and the Malaya Peninsula.

The Chola fleet crossed the Bay of Bengal to carry on trade with Burma, Ceylon, the Islands of the Indian Ocean and the Malaya Archipelago. A Tamil scholar has given a picture of the great Port of Puhar at the mouth of the Kaveri river as it was under the Cholas.

**Chola Art.** The Cholas developed the Dravidian style and almost perfected it. The Cholas were great builders and they executed works on a stupendous scale. Reference can be made in this connection to their irrigation schemes and works. "The embankment of the artificial lake built by Rajendra Chola I near his new capital Gangaikondacholapuram was sixteen miles in length with stone sluices and channels. Dams composed of huge blocks of dressed stone were thrown across the Kaveri and other rivers." Chola cities were elaborately planned and laid out. The centre of the city was the temple.

The Chola temple architecture has been appreciated for the purity of its artistic traditions. Fergusson has gone to the extent of saying that *the Chola artists conceived like giants and finished like jewellers*. A new development which modified the Dravidian architecture in later times, gradually took place in Chola art and that was the addition of a huge gateway called Gopuram to the enclosure of the temple. It attained maturity under the Pandyas.

The temple of *Koranganatha at Srinivasanallur* in Trichinopoly district is an example of the early temple architecture of the Cholas. It probably belongs to the reign of Parantaka I. It is of modest proportions and consists of the sanctuary and its attached Mandapa. The two cover a total length of fifty feet. A salient feature of this temple is that it has a considerable amount of sculpture on the wall surfaces of the Vimana consisting of full-length images of Hindu god and goddesses installed within recesses. It is pointed out that this temple heralds a new phase in the development of the Dravida temple style under the great Cholas.

Rajaraja, the Great, and Rajendra Chola were responsible for the construction of two temples which are considered to be the supreme creations of the Dravida temple style. Rajaraja, the Great, built a temple at Tanjore known as the *Brihadisvara temple* also known as *Rajarajesvara temple* after its royal builder. Its construction began some time about 1003 A.D. and the work was completed in 1010 A.D. The second temple was built by Rajendra Chola in 1025 A.D. in his new capital city of Gangaikondacholapuram. It is pointed out that in these two temples one can see the mighty resources of the Chola power at its height.

The *Tanjore temple* stands within a walled quadrangle 500 feet by 250 feet. The main structure of the temple is 180 feet and has a great Sikhara or tower consisting of 14 successive storeys rising to a height of 190 feet. It is crowned by a massive dome consisting of a single block of stone, 25 feet high and weighing about 80 tons. The massive temple building is covered from the base to the top with sculptures and decorative mouldings. The temple is composed of many structures such as a Nandi pavilion, a pillared portico and a large assembly hall. In the Tanjore Vimana, there is a sense of strength and stability and a rhythmical quality of soaring verticalism, accentuated by the dome-shaped stupika which, poised over the four-square top of the pyramid "like a light but substantial globe, appears to impart an effect of airy lightness to the entire composi-



tion. According to Percy Brown, "the Tanjore Vimana is a touchstone of Indian architecture as a whole." About the Tanjore temple as a whole it has been rightly stated that it is the largest, highest and most ambitious production of the temple-architecture.

According to Professor K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, the Tanjore Temple is "the finest monument of a splendid period of South Indian history and the most beautiful specimen of Tamil architecture at its best. The temple is remarkable alike for its stupendous proportions and for the simplicity of its design." (*The Cholas*, p. 183).

As regards the temple built by Rajendra Chola in his capital city of *Gangaikondacholapuram*, it resembles fundamentally the temple built by his father. Unfortunately, it has suffered much. It now stands in the midst of the mud-huts of a desolate village. The great temple is contained within an immense walled quadrangle. It appears that this was in the shape of a fortress enclosure. Within the court, the principal composition occupies a rectangle, about 240 feet by 100 feet with its long axis from east to west. It consists of a large Mandapa 175 feet by 90 feet and the massive Vimana, 100 square feet with a connecting vestibule. The main entrance in the middle of the eastern wall of the Mandapa is designed as an impressive portal. There are also two subsidiary entrances in the Northern and Southern walls of the vestibule. The Mandapa is a relatively low building with a flat roof supported on a cluster of pillars, more than 150 in number, arranged in colonnades in the interior of the hall. The Vimana is only 160 feet high. The treatment of the lower upright section is essentially the same as that of the Tanjore temple, but in the tapering body above, the introduction of curves adds a richer note to the creation of Rajendra Chola. According to Percy Brown, "There is a voluptuousness in the later structure, the beauty of ripe femininity, in contrast to the masculine strength of the earlier type. But in comparing these two architectural productions they present much more than a difference in kind. Stately and formal as an epic may epitomise the Tanjore Vimana while the later example has all the sensuous passion of an eastern lyric, but it seems to go even deeper than that. Each is the final and absolute vision of its creator made manifest through the medium of structural form, the one symbolising conscious might the other sub-conscious grace, but both dictated by that divinity which has seized the soul."

In the abovementioned temples of Rajaraja, the Great, and Rajendra Chola, the Dravida temple style reached its supreme expression. In the mighty sweep of the Tanjore Vimana, there was achieved a complete balance between stupendous architectural mass and aspiring verticality. Here the form dominates the composition and all ornament is subordinate and complimentary to it. In the *Gangaikondacholapuram* temple, the architectural form remains dominant in the conception, but the ornament grows richer and predicts a restless impatience that seems destined to overstep its limits and overflow in plentiful growth.



More graceful but less imposing than the Tanjore temple of Rajaraja, the Great, is the *Subrahmanya temple* in the city of Tanjore with "its highly decorated tower, less severe in the outline." The *Airavatesvara temple at Darasuram* and the *Kampaharesvara or Tribhuvaneswara temple at Tribhuvanam*, both situated in the Tanjore district, belong to the Chola period. The Darasuram temple seems originally to have a number of enclosures with the Gopuram or gateway for each. In this temple, one of the Mandapas is designed in the shape of a chariot drawn by elephants.

As regards the influence of Chola art on other countries, especially on Indo-China and the Far-East, the Chola Empire was in active communication along trade channels and otherwise with China and the Hindu states of Indo-China. It seems possible that the great temples of Angkor and the temples of Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram had a mutual influence in their conception and execution and belonged to the same line of evolution in religious architecture. A closer and more surprising parallel of Chola architecture and sculptural designs has been pointed out by A.K. Commaraswamy as found in old Zayton, modern Chuan Chou, opposite Formosa, where in a old temple of about 12th century A.D. or later, he has discovered a plinth with mouldings very similar to those of a Chola Upapitha and sculptured panels of Lilas or sports of Shiva and Krishna, on pillars.

*Sculpture.* The Chola sculptors did not attempt the "large frescoes in stone" as the Pallava bas-reliefs have been called and for which they are famous. They took more to sculpture in high relief, nearly in the round, and they concentrated more on the rich iconography that had come up in their time as a result of the growth of the hagiology of the Nayanars and Alvars. When they attempted narrative sculpture in stone, it was generally in small panels, sometimes as small as six inches by four as at Nagesvara in Kumbakonam and seldom more than two feet by one foot which is roughly the measure of the Ramayana panels of the Kampaharesvara in Tribhuvanam. They even excelled the Pallava sculptor in portraiture when they attempted it as at Srinivasanallur and Kumbakonam (Nagesvara). It is not known why they did not continue their work in this line, though they attained great skill in the casting of metal icons of considerable size.

Sculpture was generally subsidiary to architecture. It was employed as decoration on the walls, pillars, plinths, roofs and other convenient spots in temples. The Chola sculptor, however, appreciated the value of plain spaces on walls and did not crowd them with too many figures. He also did not adopt the method of ivory carver and goldsmith. He generally worked on hard rock and depended on bold strokes and flowing lines for his effects.

Portraits, icons and decorative sculpture are the main classes of Chola sculptures. Portraits are few and early but icons are many. Among the icons, Saiva figures predominant as Cholas were the followers of Shiva. However, there are some Vaisnava and Jaina images also. There is little that is mechanical and hidebound about

Chola sculpture. About the portraits of men and women in the Nagesvara temple at Kumbakonam, Ajit Ghose observes thus: "Here for the first time the Chola artist stands in sharp contrast with his Pallava predecessors and the latter's severely abstract, ideal, and schematic vision. There is no difference in outward bearing between a Pallava king and a god, between a goddess and a queen. But a new and attractive conception of life and beauty had dawned on this Chola sculpture. These Chola ladies are picturesque and realistic human figures, full of feminine grace and the joy of life. This intensely human quality may be said to distinguish every one of the statues in the niches of this shrine. This art, so unconventional, is thus refreshingly original in conception and spirit. This humanism is the Cholas' principal contribution to South Indian Art."

The Shiva temple at Tiruvalisvaram is a museum of superb early Chola iconography of the time before Rajaraja I. In the niches of the Panjaras of its Vimana and the recesses between them, there are magnificent sculptures of Shiva in his various forms. On the southern side, there is Nataraja in the centre, with Vrisabharudha and Gangadhara on the proper left and Virabhadra and Devi on the right. The western side has Lingodhava with Vishnu and Brahma on the either side in the centre. The other interesting early Chola sculptures are the relief of eight-armed Durga with two devotees kneeling on either side and a group of Vishnu and his consorts, from the ruined temple of Vishnu at Olagapuram, South Arcot. The walls of the two Brihadisvara temples of Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram contain numerous icons of large size and forceful execution.

The Nataraja image in its various forms holds the first place among the Chola bronzes. The Nataraja in the Nagesvara temple is one of the largest and finest images known. About Nataraja, Grousset writes: "Whether he be surrounded or not by the flaming aureole of the *tiruvocci* (Prabhamandala)—the circle of the world which he both fills and oversteps—the King of the Dance is all rhythm and exaltation. The tambourine which he sounds with one of his right hands draws all creatures into this rhythmic motion and they dance in his company. The conventionalized locks of flying hair and the blown scarf tell of the speed of this universal movement, which crystallizes matter and reduces it to powder in turn. One of the left hands holds the fire which animates and devours the worlds in this cosmic whirl. One of the God's feet is crushing a Titan, for 'this dance is danced upon the bodies of the dead', yet one of the right hands is making the gesture of reassurance (*Abhayamudra*), so true it is that, seen from the cosmic point of view and sub specie aeternitatis, the very cruelty of this universal determinism is kindly, as the generative principle of the future. And, indeed, on more than one of our bronzes, the King of the Dance wears a broad smile. He smiles at death and at life, at pain and at joy alike, or rather, if we may be allowed so to express it, his smile is both death and life, both joy and pain... From this lofty point of view in fact, all things fall into their place, finding their explanation and logical compulsion. Here art is the faithful interpreter of the philosophical concept.

The plastic beauty of rhythm is no more than the expression of an ideal rhythm. The very multiplicity of arms, puzzling as it may seem at first sight, is subjected in turn to an inward law, each pair remaining a model of elegance in itself so that the whole being of Nataraja thrills with a magnificent harmony in his terrible joy, and as though to stress the point that the dance of the divine actor is indeed a sport (lila) — the sport of life and death, the sport of creation and destruction, at once infinite and purposeless — the first of the left hands hangs limply from the arm in the careless gesture of Gajahasta (hand as the elephant's trunk). And lastly as we look at the back view of the statue, are not the steadiness of these shoulders which uphold the world, and the majesty of this Jove-like torso, as it were a symbol of the stability and immutability of substance while the gyration of the legs, in its dizzy speed would seem to symbolize the vortex of phenomenon?"

*Painting.* Chola painting was a continuation and development of Pallava-Pandya work in the field. We have authentic literary evidence but no specimens have survived and therefore we have no means of forming any close idea of the nature of the art as it was practised then. The fragmentary Pallava paintings still traceable in the cave temples of Tirumayam and Mamandur and in the temples of Panamalai and Kanchi date from the seventh and eighth centuries. Of the Chola paintings, the most important are those in the Pradaksina passage round the sanctum of the Tanjore temple, belonging to the time of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I. The theme of the Tanjore paintings is religious. The episodes of the life of Sundaramurti form the subject of some of the best panels. On the top of the panel on the west wall is the Kailasa scene with Shiva seated in Yogasana on a tiger skin with the Nandi (bull) in front and a group of Rishis with a couple of Apsara maidens dancing at the opposite end. Shiva is painted red and one of the Rishis blue. The scene depicts the journey of two friends to Kailasa on the invitation of Shiva.

It is pointed out that Tripurantaka panel on the north wall is the grandest composition. It is a battle scene and Shiva is standing on the deck of the chariot with his left knee bent, and the whole weight of his body thrown on the right leg which is placed forward. His eight arms carry different weapons. His vibrant frame and defiant expression suggest vigorous action. On the driver's seat is the four-headed Brahma. In front are the horses of the Asuras, facing Shiva and his Ganas. On the top is seen Durga on her lion thrusting a spear into the body of Asura while her lion is holding another by the neck.

There were grand trunk roads from the river Mahanadi in Orissa to Kottaru near Cape Comorin. Kulottunga I planted military colonies along this road which was 64 cubits in breadth and along which public ferries were maintained across all the rivers.

"In local Government, in art, religion and letters, the Tamil country reached heights of excellence never reached again in the succeeding ages. In all these spheres, as in that of foreign trade

and maritime activity, the Chola period marked the culmination of movements that began in an earlier age under the Pallavas."

*Suggested Readings*

- Sastri, K.A.N. : The Cholas, 1955.  
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## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE TRIPARTITE STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY

There was a triangular struggle for the possession of the Ganga-Yamuna Doab and the lands adjoining it among the Pratiharas of Jalor, the Palas of Bengal and the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan from the 8th to the 10th century A.D.

*Pratiharas, Palas and Rashtrakutas.* Nagabhata I, the Pratihara ruler, was a soldier of fortune and he had won his laurels against the Arabs. His son, Vatsaraja, was an ambitious king. He took up the title of Rana-Hastin or the war elephant. His ambition was to become the overlord of the whole of Northern India. At that time, Dharmapala was the Pala king of Bengal. He ruled from 770 to 810 A.D. He was not prepared to confine his rule to Bengal but hoped to become the ruler of the entire Uttarapath or Northern India. The greatness of the Rashtrakutas had started under Dantidurga but when the conflict started between the three powers, Dhruva (780-793 A.D.) was occupying the Rashtrakuta throne. He also was a very ambitious ruler and would like to be the overlord of Northern India. He felt that he had as good a right to the Ganga-Yamuna Doab and the lands adjoining it as Vatsaraja and Dharmapala.

*Achievements of Vatsaraja.* It was Vatsaraja who made the first move. Indrayudha, the ruler of Kanauj, recognised Vatsaraja as his overlord. Not satisfied with this achievement, Vatsaraja proceeded against Dharmapala of Bengal. One of the causes of the attack might be the interference of Dharmapala into the affairs of Kanauj after the latter had submitted to Vatsaraja. It is stated that the victorious Pratihara army under Vatsaraja reached as far as the Bay of Bengal before he decided to go back. The view of some scholars is that the fight between the Pratiharas and the Palas took place not in Bengal but in the Doab. It is contended that it is not safe to rely on a verse of the Prithvirajahvijaya which was composed about four centuries after the events described therein. The evidential value of the verse from the Radhanpur plates is also discounted on the ground that there is no evidence of any territorial conquests by Vatsaraja before his expedition against Dharmapala of Bengal and hence the fight between Dharmapala and Vatsaraja must have been in the Doab. In spite of this, it is maintained that there was nothing to stop Vatsaraja from marching on to Bengal after his conquest of Kanauj which is hinted at by the statement of the Sagartal inscription to the effect that Vatsaraja "forcibly wrested the empire in battle from the famous Bhandi clan, hard to overcome by reason of the rampart made of their infuriated elephants." The Bhandis

ruled Kanauj and the distance between Kanauj and Bengal was not much.

*Part played by Dhruva.* However, when Vatsaraja was returning from Bengal laden with booty, he was defeated by Dhruva, the Rashtrakuta king, who deprived him not only of his immense booty but also of his two white umbrellas which signified his sway over Vanga and Gauda. The Sanjan plates of Amoghavarsha I refer to the fight between Dhruva and Dharmapala but this version is not accepted by scholars. The present position can be put in these words: "We have a fairly large number of records of the time of Govinda III wherein the exploits of Dhruva have been celebrated but not a single one of them credits Dhruva with a victory over Bengal." Historians must wait for some more evidence in favour of the Sanjan plates before their version can be accepted.

After his victory over Vatsaraja, Dhruva did not pursue the matter further. He was contented with what he had got and he happily retired to the Deccan with his spoils. Dhruva did not realise that Dharmapala would take advantage of his absence in the Deccan and occupy the vacuum created by the weakening of the power of Vatsaraja. As a matter of fact, Dharmapala actually took full advantage of the changed situation. Somewhere between 786 and 793 A.D., he established his control over Kanauj by defeating Indraraja and placing on the throne his own nominee, Chakrayudha. The latter recognised Dharmapala as his overlord. A Durbar was held at Kanauj and on that occasion the rulers of Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yavana, Avanti, Yadu, Gandhara and Kira bowed down respectfully, with their diadems trembling, before Dharmapala. This undoubtedly made Dharmapala the Uttarapathsvamin.

*Nagabhatta II and Govinda III.* Vatsaraja had been succeeded by his son Nagabhatta II who ruled from about 805 to 839 A.D. Nagabhatta II is stated to have defeated Chakrayudha, the ruler of Kanauj who had been put on the throne by Dharmapala. Nagabhatta II also captured the hill forts of Anarta, Malava, Kirata, Vatsa, Matsya and Turushka. It is also stated in an inscription that the rulers of Andhra, Saindhava, Vidarbha and Kalinga also submitted to him. However, he himself was defeated by Govinda III who had succeeded to the Rashtrakuta throne in 793 A.D. after the death of Dhruva. It is stated that Govinda III made elaborate preparations for his invasion of the North. He marched through Bhopal and Jhansi and his objective was Kanauj. Nagabhatta II came to meet him and the battle was fought in Bundelkhand. Govinda III was victorious and Nagabhatta II had to run away to Rajputana. Chakryudha, the ruler of Kanauj, made an unconditional surrender to Govinda III. That was considered to be enough and no effort was made to march to Kanauj and occupy the same. Dharmapala, the ruler of Bengal, also submitted because he was of the view that it was better to submit than to fight against Govinda III, who like Dhruva, would not stay in Northern India for long and as Nagabhatta II had already run away to Rajputana, he would be able to take advantage of the situation created by the withdrawal of Govinda III from

Northern India. As a matter of fact, Dharmapala was grateful to Govinda III for breaking the power of Nagabhata II.

Pushing his conquest further to the North, Govinda III is stated to have reached the Himalayas. On the way, he is stated to have uprooted many a ruler and also restored many to their thrones.

As expected, Govinda III did not stay long in Northern India, but this does not mean that his expedition was without results. The ruler of Malwa submitted to Govinda III and recognised him as his overlord. Gujarat was also annexed and given to Indraraja, his younger brother. As he marched back along the Narmada to Sarabhavana, Govinda III secured the submission of the rulers of Kosala, Kalinga, Odra, Dahala and Vengi. By 803 A.D., Govinda III reached Tungabhadra and made preparations for a campaign against the Southern rulers. He was able to defeat the rulers of Kerala, Chola, Pandya, Pallava and Ganga.

When Govinda III was busy in the South, Nagabhata II took advantage of the situation in the North. It is contended that although Nagabhata II had suffered in prestige, there had been no military debacle as such. It is stated in the Nesarika plates of 805 A.D. that on seeing Govinda III ready to attack him, "the Gurjara (Nagabhata II) fled in fear somewhere so that he might not see a battle even in a dream". If this was true, Nagabhata II must have been able to keep his army intact.

Before attacking Dharmapala of Bengal, Nagabhata II "became eminent after having defeated Chakrayudha whose low character was manifest by his dependence on another." This means that Chakrayudha had accepted Dharmapala as his overlord and this fact was not palatable to Nagabhata II who attacked Chakrayudha and defeated him.

After the submission of Chakrayudha, Nagabhata II directed his attention towards Dharmapala and his armies advanced along the Ganges and reached Monghyr. The battle between Dharmapala and Nagabhata II was a hard one. It is stated in the Sagartal Prasasti that the lord of Vanga (Dharmapala) appeared like a dense dark cloud "in consequence of the crowd of mighty elephants, horses and chariots". It is also stated in the Jodhpur inscription of the Pratihara king Bauka of Mandor that Nagabhata II gained renown at Mudgagiri or Monghyr in the battle with the Gaudas. A similar reference to the victory of Nagabhata II is found in the Una grant of Avantivarman II of Saurashtra.

After his victory over Dharmapala at Monghyr, Nagabhata II did not proceed further in that direction. Starting from Kanauj, he brought under his control the territory of Bundelkhand. After that, he attacked Malwa but his success against that State was only partial. That was probably due to the help which the ruler of Malwa got from the Rashtrakuta king. It is further stated in the Sagartal Prasasti that the rulers of Andhra, Sindhu, Vidarbha and Kalinga succumbed to his (Nagabhata II) youthful energy as the moths do

unto fire. The interpretation put by Dr. R. C. Majumdar is that the rulers of these States joined hands with Nagabhatta II in an alliance, but the phraseology used does not support this view. It is rightly pointed out that fire destroys moths and it cannot make them friends. Hence the logical inference is that a very drastic treatment was given to these rulers by Nagabhatta II.

Nagabhatta II fought many battles against the Rashtrakutas. To begin with, he retreated and thus saved himself from a disaster. In the second battle, he was defeated by Karkkaraja. After the death of Govinda III in 814 A.D., Nagabhatta II fared better. Amoghavarsha, the new Rashtrakuta king, was a boy of 13 or 14 and he could not be expected to withstand against Nagabhatta II. Thus, Nagabhatta II was able to defeat all his rivals and no wonder he is described in the Buekkala inscription of 815 A.D. as Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Nagabhattachadeva.

*Rambhadra.* Nagabhatta II was succeeded by Rambhadra who ruled for about three years. He was a weak ruler and his hands were full with troubles from his enemies. "The haughty and cruel commanders" of Devapala of Bengal disturbed the peace of the eastern parts of Rambhadra's empire and Monghyr was taken back by Devapala from Rambhadra.

The view of some scholars is that Rambhadra lost Bundelkhand to Devapala and Gurjaratra to the Pratiharas of Mandora. However, this view is contested on the ground that there is no substantial evidence in favour of such a hypothesis. None of the facts on the basis of which loss of Bundelkhand by Rambhadra is assumed by Dr. R. C. Majumdar proves the loss of this territory by the Pratiharas. It is also contended that there is no sufficient basis for assuming that Rambhadra lost his hold over Gurjaratra. In the Badal inscription, it is stated that Devapala "eradicated the race of the Utkals, humbled that pride of the Hunas, scattered the pride of the rulers of the Dravidas and Gurjaras." A question arises who was the Dravida contemporary of Devapala. Three views have been put forward. One view is that he was the Rashtrakuta ruler named Amoghavarsha I. This view is rejected on the ground that the Rashtrakutas never described themselves as Dravidas but as Karatas. The second view is that he was the Pandya ruler Sivamarasriballabha who is stated to have repulsed a confederacy consisting of the Gangas, Pallavas, Cholas, Kalingas, Magadhas and others at a place identified with modern Kumbakonam. This view is also rejected on the ground that Sivamarasriballabha was not a Dravida ruler and even if he was so, it was not safe to build the whole thesis on the basis of a mere Prasasti. The third view is that he was some Pallava ruler, perhaps Dantiga Dantivarman who actually ruled over Dravida Mandala. This is the only view possible but this does not mean that it is absolutely certain that Devapala defeated any Pallava ruler.

*Mihirabhoja.* Rambhadra was succeeded by his son Mihirabhoja who ruled from 836 A.D. to 885 A.D. A new and glorious chapter began in the history of the Pratiharas with the accession of



this king. Within a few years, he was able to consolidate his position and his suzerainty was acknowledged up to the foot of the Himalayas. Having made his position strong, king Bhoja decided to measure swords with Devapala of Bengal. It is alleged that Devapala "brought low the arrogance of the Lord of the Gurjaras". The view of Dr. R. C. Majumdar is that after some time King Bhoja was able to gain success even against Devapala. This view is based on a verse from the Sagartal inscription where it is stated that Bhoja had as his married wife "the other Lakshmi, the source of the fame of Dharma's son." However, it is pointed out that if the verse in question is correctly interpreted, it has absolutely no reference to defeat of Devapala by King Bhoja or to the appropriation of the glory of the Palas by Pratiharas.

Whatever may be the real significance of the Sagartal inscription, the fact remains that King Bhoja got the upper hand after the death of Devapala in 850 A.D. The latter was succeeded by Vigrahapala, Narayanapala, Rajyapala, Gopala II and Vigrahapala II. None of these rulers was a match for King Bhoja. There are many inscriptions which refer to the victory of King Bhoja over the Palas. However, it is difficult to ascertain the eastern limit of the Pratihara empire in the reign of King Bhoja. Bhoja's empire certainly included Gorakhpur in it. It is possible that even Bihar may have been under King Bhoja. This inference is drawn from the fact that no Pala inscription has been found from Bihar covering the period between c. 871 and c. 908 A.D. It is presumed that the Pala power must have disappeared from this region during this period and that is why no inscription for this period has been found. However, the fact cannot be ignored that no inscription of Bhoja also has been found from this region. One reason can be that there was going on a struggle for supremacy between the Palas and the Pratiharas in Bihar during this period and the same had not been settled finally one way or the other.

It is stated in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* that Sankarvarman "caused universal sovereignty which had been taken away by the superior King Bhoja to be given to the scion of the Thakkiyaka family, who had become his servant by accepting the office of the Chamberlain". From this it is inferred that the Pratihara power extended northwards also.

King Bhoja also directed his energy towards the South. He overran Southern Rajputana and the tracts around Ujjain up to the Narmada river. Bhoja's determination to expand towards the South brought him into conflict with Amoghavarsha I and his feudatory, the Rashtrakuta Dhruva of the Gujarat line. There were many factors in favour of King Bhoja. The feudatory and Amoghavarsha I were not on good terms. There were dissensions even in the Gujarat family. It is true that King Bhoja was old but Amoghavarsha I was older and also a devotee of Jainism. King Bhoja was able to bring Malwa and Saurashtra under his control. When he interfered in the war of succession in the Gujarat line of the Rashtrakutas, Dhruva II of Gujarat was able to repulse his forces. Later on, Krishna II

tried to stop aggression and in about 886 A.D. combined his forces with those of his Gujarat feudatory, Krishnaraja Akalavarsha, to lead an attack on the Pratiharas in Malwa. A well-contested battle was fought near Ujjain in which the Pratiharas were defeated. This fact of victory over King Bhoja is mentioned in many inscriptions. King Bhoja was not prepared to put up with his defeat and he retaliated. The result was that the Gujarat line of the Rashtrakutas disappeared completely at the hands of King Bhoja. It appears that King Bhoja was defeated near Ujjain because he was taken unprepared. However, when reinforcements came he was able to defeat not only the Rashtrakuta King but also his feudatory.

*Mahendrapala I.* King Bhoja was succeeded by Mahendrapala I who ruled from 885 to 910 A.D. Under him, the Pratiharas continued to have the upper hand and Narayanapala of Bengal continued to lose ground to the Pratiharas. The Rashtrakuta King, Krishna II (878-914 A.D.), was too busy in his wars with the Eastern Chalukyas and was not able to attend to the happenings in Northern India. Krishna II overran the Andhra country and after defeating the Chalukya ruler, took him as a prisoner. Although he was released on the condition that he would rule as a vassal of the Rashtrakutas, he did not keep his promise and revolted once again and the Rashtrakutas were not able to subdue him.

*Indra III.* It appears that after the death of Mahendrapala, there was some trouble in the Pratihara empire. Some writers are of the opinion that there was a civil war between the two sons of Mahendrapala, Mahipala and Bhoja II. They were backed by Harsha, a Chandela ruler, and Kohalladeva, the ruler of Chedi. This view is challenged on the basis of evidence from inscriptions. Even if there was no civil war, there was a lot of trouble during the early years of the reign of Mahipala. The Palas reconquered Bihar from Mahipala before the 54th year of the reign of Narayanapala. However, they did not proceed any further. The Rashtrakuts reconquered Khetakamandala during the reign of Krishna II. After the death of Krishna II, Indra III came to the throne and it was during his reign that the Rashtrakutas attacked Northern India once again. The details of the campaign are to be found in the Pampabharata and the Cambay plates of Govinda IV. It is stated that "the courtyard (of the temple of the God) Kalapriya became uneven by the strokes of the tusks of his rutting elephants. The unfathomable Yamuna which rivals the sea was crossed by his horses. He completely devastated this Mahodaya, the city of the enemy, which is even today greatly renowned among men by the name of Kusasthala." The view of Dr. Altekar was that Kalapriya was the Mahakala of Ujjain and Indra III prepared the ground for invasion by defeating a little earlier the Paramara Chief of Malwa. However, this view is not accepted as the Paramara chief mentioned by Dr. Altekar was not a contemporary of Indra III and had actually lived nearly a century before the accession of Indra III to the Rashtrakuta throne. Dr. V. V. Mirashi points out that Kalapriya is not Mahakala of Ujjain but the Sun God Kalapriya, whose temple is at Kalapriya or modern Kalpi. This was one of the great centres of Sun worship in India.

As regards the route followed by Indra III in his invasion of Northern India, it is stated that he might have proceeded along the B. p. A. V. or the Trans-Ganga route to Kalpi where he must have encamped for some time before crossing over to the Northern side of the Yamuna. This place was very near Kanauj. It is stated that Narasimha Chalukya, the general of Indra III, "plucked from the Ganges the goddess of victory, whom though desirous of keeping, he had held too loosely." He captured the champion elephants which marched in front and put to flight the army of the Pratiharas. Mahipala, the Gurjara or Pratihara ruler, ran away from the battlefield, probably eastwards, pursued by the enemy. The *Panjabharata* says that Narasimha, the Rashtrakuta general, reached the junction of the Ganges and the sea but this does not seem to be correct. Mahipala could not be expected to come to the territory of the Palas where alone the sea was. It appears that Narasimha did not go beyond Allahabad.

Like his predecessors, Indra III did not stay long in Northern India. When he was fighting in the North, there was a rising in the South. It was more desirable for Indra III to go back to the South to protect his own dominions than to carry on his campaigns in Northern India. It is also possible that the feudatories of Mahipala might have come forward to help him because "the Rashtrakuta advance threatened not only the political existence of the Pratihara empire but in some cases their own also, especially of the Mahasamantadhipatis like Dhurbhata and Gunaraja whose territories lay at the Southern end of the empire." For the same reason, Harsha, the Chandela ruler, also came to the help of Mahipala. No wonder, Indra III decided to go back to the Deccan.

The attack on Northern India by Indra III took place in 915 A.D. The fact that this attack did not weaken very much the power of Mahipala is proved by the fact that Al Masudi who was in India in 915-916 A.D. still describes the Pratihara ruler as "Lord of city of Kanauj who possessed large armies in garrisons on the North and on the South, on the East and on the West, for he is surrounded on all sides by war-like Kings." He further says that he had four armies according to the four quarters of the wind, each of them numbering 700,000 to 900,000 men. The army of the North fought against the Prince of Multan. The army of the South fought against the Rashtrakutas. The other two armies marched to meet the enemies in every direction. An inscription found from a stone pillar at Asni in Uttar Pradesh refers to the ever-increasing reign of Mahipala. The Chandakaushika of Kshemisavara refers to the defeat of the Rashtrakutas by Mahipala. The *Balabharata* of Rajasekhara wishes success to the Raghu family in which Mahipala was born. Mahipala is described by him as one "who had made the Muralas bow down their heads in salutation, who was like bilious fever to the Mekalas, who had driven the Kalingas before himself in battle, who had spoilt the pastime of the Kerala ruler, who had conquered the Kulutas, who was like a battle-axe to the Kuntalas and who had taken away by force the fortunes of the Ramathas." Mahipala is also referred to as the pearl-jewel of the Raghu family and Maharaj-

a part of Anavapura. The Marathas have been identified with the Saurashtra who were the feudatories of the Rashtrakutas. The Marathas were the Chodas of Irpary. The Kuntis were people of the Kuntavarsa or Kuntal District of the Purnya. The Rautas were probably a people on the Indo-Afghan border. The Kuntis were the Rajasthani. It appears that Marathas not only drove away the Rashtrakutas from the Marathas but even pushed into their territory. There is no mention of what is meant and in the *Bhavavata* in the *Hindia* by Alau, the work of a Persian geographer of the 10th century A.D.

**Pratihara rule.** During the reign of Vinayakapala, the Pratihara Empire suffered at the hands of the Rashtrakutas and the Cholas. The Rashtrakuta rulers had done nothing during the reign of Amoghavarsha II and Govinda IV as they were busy with their internal troubles. However, when they rule assumed the throne and became king, Amoghavarsha III, the Rashtrakutas followed a vigorous foreign policy. In about 937 A.D., Bhutuga, brother-in-law of Amoghavarsha was put on the Ganga throne after killing Rajahmilla, the Ganga king. Before 939 A.D., Amoghavarsha invaded Northern India and made the Gauras (Pothharas) a part of his long Kalanjara and Chittor. This may mean that the Rashtrakutas helped the Chodas of Irpary to capture Kalanjara. Chittor may be equated with Chitor and it may mean that the Rashtrakutas helped Bhartapatta II who had married a Rashtrakuta princess, to occupy Chittor. Yasovarman Chandela of Khajuraho captured Kalanjara and made the Chandelas Kalanjaraadhipatis or Lords of Kalanjara. Yasovarman is also said to have harried Kosala, Kuru and Malwa, all of which were parts of the Pratihara Empire at that time. It is said that Yasovarman turned the Ganges and Yamuna into "his pleasure lakes" and he was a "scorching fire to the Gurjaras". Whatever the element of exaggeration in the statements, they certainly mean that Vinayakapala suffered much at the hands of Yasovarmana. Even the Chauhanas of Sakambhari defied the authority of Vinayakapala. Vakpati, the Chauhan ruler, took up the title of Maharaj and repulsed the attack of the Pratihara Tantrapala who was probably Governor or representative of the Pratiharas. When Vinayakapala died in about 943 A.D., the Pratihara Empire was declining rapidly.

**Krishna III.** Amoghavarsha III was succeeded by his son Krishna III and he ruled from 940 to 968 A.D. He was one of the ablest monarchs of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. In about 943 A.D., Krishna III and Bhutuga attacked Prantaka I, the Chola king and captured Tanjore and Kanchi. Probably, Prantaka I was able to drive out the Rashtrakutas from the southern part of his kingdom. However, the districts of Arcot, Chingleput and Vellore continued to be in the hands of the Rashtrakutas. When the Cholas tried to get back these districts, the battle of Takkolam took place in which the Cholas were defeated. It is stated that Bhutuga got into Rajaditya's howdah and slew him. Very great importance is attached to the battle of Takkolam. It finished the dreams of Prantaka. He lost Tondimandalam. The Banas, Vaidumbas and Nolambas repudiated the authority of Prantaka I and recognised the overlordship of Krishna III. The



Pandya also repudiated the authority of Prantaka. Krishna III also fought against the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi.

*Decline of the Pratiharas.* In the North, with the decline of the Pratihara Empire, real power passed into the hands of Chandelas, the Chauhans, the Guhilas, the Chaulukyas of Gujarat and the Parmaras of Malwa. Siyaka II, the Parmara ruler, was on friendly terms with Krishna III. It was with his help or co-operation that Krishna III attacked Malwa. It is stated in an inscription from Sravana Belgola that Narasimha II, the son and successor of Butuga, defeated the Gurjaradhiraja during the course of the northern expedition of Krishna III. The Holekeri inscriptions tell us that Sudrakayya and Goggiyamma, the generals of Narasimha, acquired the title of Ujjayini-Bhujanga, i.e., paramour of Ujjayini as a result of their successes. That could be possible only if Krishna III attacked Ujjayini. The view of Dr. Altekar is that the Gurjaradhiraja mentioned above was the Parmara ruler, Siyaka II. However, it is pointed out that the Parmara rulers never took the title of Gurjaradhiraja. There is no historical data to show that Ujjayini was at that time the centre of Parmara power. The term Gurjaradhiraja mentioned above also does not apply to Mularaja I of Gujarat. By this process of elimination, we come to the conclusion that the Gurjaradhiraja mentioned above must have been a Gurjar-Pratihara king of Kanauj. The defeat inflicted on the Pratiharas must have been decisive and there is nothing to show that the Pratiharas continued to rule Malwa after that. When the Rashtrakuta armies went back to the Deccan, Malwa was probably under the charge of Siyaka II. The northern raid of the Rashtrakutas must have taken place between 960 A.D. and 967 A.D.

*End of the Rashtrakutas.* Krishna III was succeeded by Khottiga, his younger brother. He was an old man and he lacked the qualities of his brother. Siyaka II attacked the Rashtrakuta territory and defeated Khottiga. It is stated in Udepur Prasasti that "with valour comparable to that of Garuda, Harsadeva (Siyaka II) took hold of the royal fortune of Kottigadeva." It is stated in another inscription that the Parmara ruler "mounted on an elephant destroyed the army of the Kannata Emperor on the banks of the river Narmada and having destroyed the enemies of the illustrious ruler Sri-Harsa went to heaven worshipped by the lotus-like eyes of heavenly nymphs."

Khottiga did not survive the defeat. He was succeeded by Karkka II who lost the throne within 18 months of his accession. Taila II revolted and defeated Karkka II but the latter managed to escape. It was in this way that the Rashtrakuta Empire came to an end.

The tripartite struggle between the Pratiharas, the Palas and the Rashtrakutas ended because all the three powers got exhausted by their continuous wars against each other. It is rightly pointed out that they were so busy in fighting that they did not realise that all of them had become weak on account of their wars. The Pratihara empire broke up into a number of states, some of which were

associated with the rise of the Rajputs. The Palas were threatened by the Chola armies and were later on ruled by the Senas. The later Chalukyas began to rule in the area where the Rashtrakutas had ruled previously. It was in this manner that the tripartite struggle was over.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE PANDYAS

**Early History.** The Pandyas occupied the region comprising the modern districts of Madura and Tinnevely, part of Trichinopoly and sometimes also of Travancore. In the time of Pliny, the capital of the country was at Madura, although the kingdom had existed from much earlier days. The Pandyas were known to Katyayana, the Sanskrit grammarian, who flourished in the fourth century B.C. Megasthenes was told strange things about the Pandya kingdom. He was informed that "Herakles begot a daughter in India whom he called Pandara. To her he assigned that portion of India which lies to the southward and extends to the sea while he distributed the people subject to her rule into 365 villages, giving orders that one village each day should bring to the treasury the royal tribute so that the queen might always have the assistance of those men whose turn it was to pay the tribute in coercing those who for the time being were defaulters in their payment." This female ruler was credited with having received from her hero father 500 elephants, 4,000 cavalry and 130,000 infantry.

It is stated that a mission was sent by king Pandion to Augustus Caesar in 20 B.C. The author of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (c.A.D. 80) and Ptolemy (c.A.D. 140) were well-informed about the names and positions of the marts and ports of the Pandya country.

The ancient Tamil literature refers to many kings who belonged to an extremely early period. However, the first Pandya king about whom some definite data can be given was Nedum-Cheliyan. He lived in the second century of the Christian era. He was a contemporary of Gajabahu I of Ceylon whose date has been fixed by Prof. Geiger between A.D. 173 and 191. A remarkable characteristic of the Pandya State at that time was the maintenance at Madura of a flourishing literary academy or Sangam whose members produced literature of a very high quality. The *Kural* of Tiruvalluva was written about A.D. 1000. "The Epic of the Anklet" and the "Jewel-Belt" were written a century or so later.

**Hiuen Tsang.** It is not possible to write a connected history of the Pandya kingdom during the early centuries of the Christian era and we have to be contented with what little we know at present. Kudungon ruled from 590 to 620 A.D. Unfortunately, we do not possess any details about him. All that is known is that he suppressed the Kalabhras who had totally eclipsed the Pandya kingdom earlier. Hiuen Tsang visited South India in 640 A.D. It is true that he did not personally visit the Pandya country but

he has left us some information which he got from his Buddhist friends at Kanchi. He gives the name of Malakuta or Malakotta to the country. He has not mentioned the name of the capital or its position. He is also silent on the administrative system of the country. However, he tells us that Buddhism was almost extinct in the Pandya kingdom. The ancient monasteries were mostly in ruins. The temples of the Hindu gods numbered in hundreds. The Digambara Jains were present in multitudes. The inhabitants did not care for learning and they were busy in trade, particularly that of pearls. He also tells us that the inhabitants of the Pandya kingdom were "black.....harsh and impetuous of mixed religions, indifferent to culture and only good at trade."

Another Pandya king was Arikesari Maravarman. During his reign, the Pandya power expanded at the cost of the Cheras. There also started the struggle between the Pandyas and the Pallavas. Arikesari was a great soldier and he won a spectacular victory at Nelveli (Tinnevely).

Arikesari was succeeded by Koccadiyan Ranadhira. The latter reduced a chief at Mardur, "a hill country between Tinnevely and Travancore". He also conquered the Kongu country and assumed the title of Kongarkoman.

Ranadhira was succeeded by his son Maravarman Rajasimha I. He had to carry on a prolonged war against the Pallavas. There was some trouble in the Pallava kingdom on account of rival claims to the throne and Rajasimha I decided to avail of the opportunity. He took up the cause of Chitramaya who was a claimant to the throne and went to war against the Pallavas. To begin with, he did very well and not only defeated the Pallava king but also besieged him at Nandipura. The situation changed very quickly with the arrival of Udyachandra, the Pallava general, on the scene. The latter succeeded not only in rescuing Nandivarman but also was able to kill Chitramaya. In spite of this the Pandya power continued to increase. Rajasimha I was able to conquer Kongu country and beyond. He also claimed victory over the western Chalukyas of Badami. A daughter of Sripursha, the Western Ganga king, was given in marriage to the Pandya ruler.

Rajasimha I was succeeded by Varguna I who ruled from 765 to 815 A.D. He is described as the "greatest imperialist of his dynasty". During his reign, the conflict between the Pandyas and Pallavas started once again. The Pallava ruler entered into an alliance with the rulers of Kongu and Kerala but that did not help matters. We are told that the Pallavas were defeated at Pannagadam. Varguna also subdued the Ay Chief, the Adigamas of Tagadur and the Kongu country. The result was that he became the supreme "master of Tanjore, Tiruchirapalli, Salem and Coimbatore districts and also of Southern Travancore."

Varguna I was succeeded by his son Srimar Srivallabha who ruled from 815 to 862 A.D. He continued the aggressive policy of his father. He invaded Ceylon. In order to check the Pandya power, a confederacy consisting of the Gangas, Cholas, Pallavas, Kalingas,



Magadhas, etc., was formed under the leadership of the Pallava ruler. However, the Pandya ruler was able to defeat them all at Kudamukku (Kumbhakonam). The Pallavas tried once again and were able to defeat the Pandyas at Tellaru (near Wandiwash). It is pointed out that the "victory of Tellaru was a turning point. It gave Nandi (the Pallava ruler) the permanent title of Tellarerinda and was followed up by further success as a result of which his Pandya forces were rolled back into their home country and the Pallava army advanced as far as the banks of the Vaigai in the heart of the Pandyan kingdom." The Pandyas were defeated once again by the son of Nandi, the Pallava ruler.

*Varagunavarman II* succeeded his father Srimar and ruled from 862 to 880 A.D. He tried to raise the prestige of his dynasty by invading the Chola territory. However, he was surrounded by a combined army of the Cholas, the Pallavas and the Western Gangas. The combined army was led by the Pallava ruler and the Pandyas were defeated at Sripurambiyam. It is rightly pointed out that this war ruined Varguna and the Pandya Empire.

Prantaka Viranayana, the brother of Varagunavarman II, came to the throne in 880 and ruled up to 900 A.D. and he was succeeded by his son Maravarman Rajasimha II who ruled from 900 to 920 A.D. The Cholas invaded the Pandya kingdom whose ruler appealed to the King of Ceylon for help. However, the combined armies of Ceylon and the Pandyas were defeated in 915 A.D. at Vellur. That put an end to independence of the Pandyas. Rajasimha ran away to Ceylon and afterwards took shelter in Kerala.

For 30 years, the Pandyas acknowledged the overlordship of the Cholas. Fortunately for the Pandyas, there was trouble in the Chola kingdom and Prantaka was defeated by Krishna III, the Rashtrakuta king, in the battle of Takkolam in 949 A.D. One Vira Pandya claims to have defeated the Cholas. Vira Pandya ruled as an independent ruler till he was killed by Aditya II. Rajaraja Chola also defeated the Pandyas at the beginning of his reign. His son, Rajendra I, attacked the Pandya territory and established a Chola-Pandya line by placing himself as the Viceroy with his headquarters at Madura. He was also able to get back from the ruler of Ceylon the treasure and the insignia of the Pandya royalty. This happened after the ruler of Ceylon was defeated and captured. In the last quarter of the 10th century and the beginning of the 11th century, another attempt was made by the Pandyas to revive their past glory but they failed on account of opposition from Kulottunga I who ruled from 1070 to 1120 A.D. Military colonies were also set up in the Pandya territory with a view to keep the people in check.

During the 12th century, the Pandyas continued to grow. They also carried on their struggle with the rulers of Ceylon. However, they received a setback as two rival claimants put forward their claims to the Pandya throne. Their names were Prakarama Pandya and Kulasekhar. The ruler of Ceylon took up the cause of Prakarama Pandya and the Cholas took up the cause of Kulasekhara.

Kulasekhara was able to kill Prakarama Pandya and the army of Ceylon was defeated. The Cholas decided to teach a lesson to the ruler of Ceylon and the latter asked for the help of Kulasekhara by recognising him as the rightful King of Pandyas. Kulottunga sent an army under General Pallavarya to reduce the power of Kulasekhara. Pallavarya won a large number of victories over the Pandya king. He was ultimately captured and sent into exile. Vira Pandya, son of Prakarama Pandya, was put on the Pandya throne. Vira Pandya joined the ruler of Ceylon against the Cholas. However, he was defeated and Vikrama Pandya came to the throne. Kulottunga III attacked once again the Pandya territory and overpowered Jatvarman Kulasekhara (1190-1226 A.D.). Prof. K. A. N. Sastri points out that "the success of Kulottunga was by no means complete and the seed was sown for a war of revenge". Sundara Pandya who ruled from 1226 to 1238 A.D. defeated Kulottunga III and he along with his son was driven into wilderness and Uraiyur and Tanjore were burnt. By this victory "was ushered into existence the glorious period of Pandya imperialism which remained intact throughout the 13th century."

Sundara Pandya was succeeded by his son, Sundara Pandya II. He was confronted with the rising power of the Hoyasalas of Dvarasamudra who advanced along the base of the Eastern Ghats and defeated him. Only the coastline remained in the possession of the Pandyas. Ultimately, the Pandyas became the feudatories of the Hoyasalas. When the Hoyasalas were defeated by the Muslims in the beginning of the 14th century, Madura and the Pandya territory came under the control of the Muslims. Petty Pandya chiefs continued to rule over Madura as vassals, first of the Muslim Viceroy of the South and then of the Vijayanagar Empire which absorbed them in the 16th century.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII

### GREATER INDIA

According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, "The Indian colonies in the Far East must ever remain as the high watermark of maritime and colonial enterprise of the ancient Indians." The latest researches of Indian and foreign scholars have also exploded the theory of splendid isolation of the Indians in the past. It has been proved beyond the shadow of doubt that the Indians of the past were not stay-at-home people, but went out of their country for exploration, conversion, trade and conquest.

There is no unanimity of opinion amongst scholars regarding the motives which took the people of India outside. However, it cannot be denied that trade definitely played an important part. The Indians went out to carry on trade with the islands in the Far East. Some of them went out to spread Hinduism and Buddhism. Some went out on account of the spirit of adventure in them. Probably, those colonies provided an outlet to the surplus population in India. In certain cases, all the above factors or some of them combined to induce the Indians to go outside their country.

As regards the period of Indian expansion outside, four different lines of evidence point out the first two centuries of the Christian era as the time limit before which these colonies were accomplished facts. (1) Ptolemy writing in the middle of the second century has used a large number of geographical names of Sanskrit origin in Indo-China. (2) When the Chams or the people of Annam appear in history towards the close of the second century, they were already under a Hindu or Hinduised dynasty. (3) The Chinese had intercourse with the Hindu kingdom of Fon-Han in the first half of the third century A.D. At that time, the throne was occupied by a usurper and two kings had already ruled before him for a period of 93 years. This takes us back to the first half of the second century as the date of the foundation of the dynasty. (4) An ambassador of a small Hindu kingdom (Tenasserim) who visited the Chinese court in 515 A.D. is reported to have said that their kingdom was founded more than 400 years ago.

Indian culture spread to Champa, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Bali, Cambodia, Siam, Malaya Peninsula, Sailendra Empire, Ceylon, Burma, China and Tibet. It is desirable to study in detail the story of Indian expansion in each of these places separately.

*Champa (Annam).* Champa is the remotest colony in the East and was less known than Kamboja and Java. According to Elliot, the Hindu dynasty of Champa was founded between 150 and 200 A.D. The conquerors were known as Chams and hence the

country came to be known as Champa. Sri Mara was the founder of the Hindu dynasty. A successor of Sri Mara was king Bhadravarman. He was responsible for the construction of the temple



of Bhadravarman (Siva) at Myson which became the national shrine of the Chams. The other two dynasties were the Panduranga dynasty and Bhriyu dynasty. Indravarman III (910 A.D.) was a great Hindu scholar who knew the six systems of Hindu philosophy, the Buddhist philosophy, the grammar of Panini and the Kasika and the Uttarakalpa of Saiva doctrine. Under king Parambodhisattva (1081 A.D.), a united kingdom of Champa was established once again but its independence was ended by the Annamites.

We have plenty of information regarding the influence of Indian culture on Champa in many fields. As regards religion, both Brahmanical, Hinduism and Buddhism were prevalent there. It was not the Vedic religion of old but the neo-Brahmanical religion that was evolved almost at the same time as Buddhism and Jainism. The essential characteristic of this new religion was its sectarian character, the chief god being recognized as either Brahma, Vishnu or Siva. The belief in the multiplicity of gods was replaced by absolute faith and devotion to one supreme God. In course of time, the sectarian Brahmanical religion triumphed over Buddhism which had played an important part in India. The religious history of India during the first thousand years of the Christian era presented a new spectacle, the gradual rise of the new sects and the corresponding decline of Buddhism. All these characteristic features can be traced in minute detail in the religious history of Champa.

Of the two Brahmanical sects that flourished in Champa, Saivism was by far the more influential and exercised a profound influence on the whole course of religious development. There are references to Siva in 92 out of 130 inscriptions collected by Dr.



R.C. Majumdar. Temples of Myson and Po-Nagar are dedicated to Siva. Siva was worshipped under various names.

Although not so prominent as Saivism, Vaisnavism also played an important part in Champa. Vishnu was known by various names. Laxmi is also referred to as Padma and Sri. It was a well-known goddess of Champa. Brahma is referred to as creator in several inscriptions.

A characteristic feature of the religious development in Champa was the spirit of toleration that marked it from the beginning to the end. Although sectarianism prevailed and two or three predominant Brahmanical sects flourished side by side with Buddhism, we hear of animosity in the field of religion. On the other hand, we find a liberal and catholic spirit showing reverence to all religious sects. The kings, too, often practically demonstrated eclecticism. The Indian theory of transmigration seems to have been the basis of religious life. Buddhism also had a fairly stronghold of the people of Champa.

The Indian colonists of Champa tried to build up a society of the orthodox Hindu type. However, it had to be modified in some essential aspects by the pre-existing traditions, manners and customs of the people.

The people were theoretically divided into four castes : Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. However, this division hardly existed in practical life except with regard to Brahmans and Kshatriyas. The Indian colonists belonged mainly to the ranks of the Kshatriyas and Brahmans. On account of their wealth, the merchants probably occupied a high position in society. Beyond this, there were probably no social divisions among the common ranks of the people, whether Indians or Chams. The distinction between Brahmans and Kshatriyas seems more akin to that of classes than that of castes. Inter-marriage between the two was in vogue. The Brahmans occupied a high position in society but they did not dominate over the king to the same extent as they did in India. They were regarded as gods among men and the murder of a Brahman was regarded as a very heinous crime.

There was another distinction in society and that was between the aristocracy and commonalty. These two divisions were certainly over-lapping to a great extent. In other words, the members of the aristocracy most often belonged to the Brahman and Kshatriya classes, but it almost certainly comprised other people who gained this high rank by virtue of wealth or services rendered to the state.

Indian dress was used among the people. Indian Langoti was used by the ascetics. Marriage was limited to one's own Gotra. The marriage ceremonies and the part played by the Brahmans was the same as in India. A similar relation existed between husband and wife as in India. Sati was prevalent. There is a mention of queens immolating themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands. The Hindu calendar was used. Hindu festivals were celebrated.

The funeral ceremonies were the same in most cases. Indian musical instruments such as *Tabla* and lute are found there.

As regards *literature*, Sanskrit was the language of the learned. It was also the official language of the country. Many kings of Champa were Sanskrit scholars. Brahmi script was used in inscriptions. The books that were in use were the four Vedas, six Sastras, the Epics, Buddhist philosophy including the Mahayan system, religious literature of Saivism and Vaisnavism, Panini's grammar along with its commentary, Dharmasastras of Manu and Narada, the Puranas and classical Sanskrit literature including prose and Kavya literature.

As regards art, it was the handmaid of religion in Champa as in India. We have the groups of temples of Myson, Dong Duong and Po-Nagar. The temples of Dong Duong are Buddhist while the others are Saivite. The temple architecture of Champa is similar to that of Badami, Conjeeveram and Mamallapuram.

*Java.* There are many views regarding the beginning of Hindu colonisation of Java. One view connects the original colonies under their leader called Ajisaka with the heroes of the Mahabharata and Astina or Hastinapura. Another view traces the colonisation to Gujrat. The third view traces it to Kalinga from where "twenty thousand families were sent to Java by the prince of Kalinga". Another view dates the foundation of the Hindu state in Java to 56 A.D. The Javanese era started by Ajisaka starts from 78 A.D. which is also the beginning of the Saka era of India. According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, "The Indian Settlement in Java dates from the 2nd century A.D. if not earlier, and the Hindu culture flourished there till the end of the 15th century." Fahien, the Chinese traveller, visited Java on his way to China in about 418 A.D. He tells us that there was no Buddhism but only Brahmanism in Java. The name Java is probably taken from the Sanskrit word Yava. The Kings of Java had their names which ended with Varman.

King Sannaha was the founder of a Hindu kingdom in Java in the 8th century. He was succeeded by Sanjaya who conquered the whole of Java and Bali and even invaded Sumatra, Cambodia and other lands overseas. Another kingdom known as Majapahit was founded by Vijaya. Under King Rajasanagara, the kingdom of Java became supreme and its authority was acknowledged in nearly all the chief islands and a large portion of the Malaya Peninsula. After his death in 1389 A.D., the dynasty began to decline. Later on, it was conquered by Islam.

The Indians affected the people of Java in many ways. Both Brahmanism and Buddhism flourished side by side. We find the worship of the Siva-Linga, Vishnu and Brahma in the temples. We have the temple of Siva at Bayon. Images of Mahadeva and Durga have also been found. Buddhist inscriptions and temples have been found in Java. Images of Buddha have been found. Manjusri and the previous births of Buddha are represented on the Borobudur temple. Nagari script was used in Buddhist inscriptions. Caste system

was introduced into Java. We have frequent references to Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Sudras.

The temples of Java are standing monuments of the influence exercised by Indian thought and art in moulding the development of the entire art of Java. The monumental history of Java begins at the Dieng Plateau in Central Java with its group of Hindu temples known as Chandi (temple), Punta Deva, Bhima, Sri Khanda, Pawon and Arjuna. The earliest Buddhist temple is that of Tara known as Chandi Kalasan of 778 A.D. It was followed by Chandi Mendut which contains three colossal stone images of the Buddha with two Bodhisattvas. These are regarded as master-pieces of art. Near this is three-storeyed Chandi Sari which is in ruins. However, there are a few surviving sculptures. Chandi Sewee is another group of Buddhist temples on raised terrace surrounded by 246 smaller temples in four rows. This is all in ruins now. We have the Siva temple of Chandi Banon near Borobudur. Superb images of Vishnu, Siva, Brahma, Ganesh and Agastya Sivaguru have been found from there. We have also many temples at Prambanam. The best of the temples at Prambanam are known as Chandi Loro Jauggrang. These are considered to be greatest Hindu monuments of Java. However, the most famous monument of Java is the Buddhist stupa of *Borobudur* which was constructed about 750 A.D. by the Sailendra kings of Sri Vijaya. Here we have continuous rows of sculptured panels, numbering about 1,500 and extending, if placed side by side, over three miles, placed on the main walls and balustrades all along the four passages. These sculptures include carved human figures, elephants, monkeys and other animals. Forest sceneries are also depicted. Borobudur is invaluable for its sculptures which are unsurpassed in the East for their profusion and beauty. We do not find anywhere else a sculptural illustration of Buddhist lore and doctrine so marvellous in its extent and detail as at Borobudur.

According to Dr. Vogel, "From an artistic point of view the Borobudur is invaluable on account of its sculptures which are unsurpassed in the east for their profusion and beauty. Nowhere do we find a sculptural illustration of Buddhist lore and doctrine so marvellous in its extent and detail. Also they are distinguished by a definite style in which mental repose is expressed in forms of singular gracefulness."

*Sumatra.* The earliest Hindu kingdom in Sumatra was Sri-Vijaya which was founded in or before the fourth century A.D. It rose to great eminence towards the end of the seventh century A.D. In 684 A.D., Sumatra was ruled over by a Buddhist king named Sri Jayanasa. Itsing, the Chinese traveller, visited Sumatra twice. He tells us that Sumatra was a centre of Buddhist learning. Her king possessed trading ships sailing between India and Sumatra. The city of Sri Vijaya was the chief centre of trade with China. There was regular navigation between it and Kwan-Tung.

Heine-Geldern describes the influence of South India on Sumatra in these words: "The invasions of Sumatra by a king of Chola in the eleventh century, the Tamil inscription of Luba Tua from the



year 1088 A.D. and the Dravidian tribal names still to be found among the Batak are also not to be forgotten. So we can safely assert that Sumatra has not only once been colonized by Hindus, but that, owing to more than a thousand years of close connection, it became an integral part of the Greater Indian cultural area. It is natural that other cultural elements reached Sumatra from the Tamil region and Malabar than those that came from Bengal, and again, influences coming from South India in the time of the Chola kings of the eleventh century must have differed remarkably from those of the Pallava period in the seventh. Moreover, material as well as spiritual influences did not make their way always directly from Indian mother-country but were also transmitted by way of various Indian colonies, specially by Java, thus being subjected more or less to changes and assimilations before reaching the islands."

**Borneo.** The earliest evidence of Hindu colonisation of Borneo is furnished by inscriptions which have been referred on paleographic grounds to about 400 A.D. These inscriptions refer to King Mula-varman, son of Asva-varman and grandson of King Kundunga. Mula-varman performed a sacrifice known as Vahusuvarnakam, and gave 20,000 cows to the Brahmans. The inscriptions show that the Brahmanas dominated the society in Borneo.

**Bali.** The island of Bali possesses the unique distinction of being the only Hindu colony in the Far East which still retains its old culture and civilisation to a considerable extent. Islam has failed to penetrate into this island. The people of Bali are still proud of their Hindu connection. Vishnu, Siva, Indra, Ganesh, Nandi, Krishna, and the heroes of the Mahabharata are still known. The Vedas, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are found there although not in Sanskrit but in Kawi. The people call their deities as Devas. We have the temples of Durga and the images of Durga and Kaliki. Sati prevails among the noble families. The bodies of the dead are still burnt.

The Indian caste-system prevails in its essential features even to-day in Bali. Their society is divided into four castes, viz., Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. The higher castes have certain privileges not enjoyed by others.

It appears from Chinese accounts that Bali was a rich and civilized kingdom ruled by Hindu colonists who professed Buddhism. The kingdom existed as early as the sixth century A.D.

**Cambodia.** The earliest Hindu settlement in Cambodia is known by the Chinese name of Funan. This kingdom was founded in the first century A.D. by Kaundinya. Kaundinya II seems to have reorganised the state and society. He introduced Indian laws and rulers in the kingdom. Guna-varman was one of his descendants. He consecrated a temple to Vishnu. Another descendant was Jaya-varman. The last king of this dynasty was Rudra-varman. After him, the Funan was conquered by Kambuja which was originally its vassal state in Northern Cambodia.



Kambuja was a dependency of Java for some time. However, it became independent under Jaya-varman II who ruled from 802 to 825 A.D. He invited Hiranyadama, a Brahman, from India. Yasovardhana became king in 889 A.D. He was the founder of the Kambuja empire and the Angkor civilisation. The Sanskrit language spread in the country. Surya-Varman II is described as one of the greatest kings of Kambuja. His empire included Lower Burma and northern part of Malaya Peninsula. He had two lakhs of war elephants. He performed many sacrifices. He was responsible for the construction of the famous Angkor Vat which has been described as one of the wonders of the world. He sent envoys to China. Jayavarman VII ruled from 1181 A.D. onwards. He conquered Champa and a large part of Lower Burma. He founded the new capital of Angkor Thom. After that, Kambuja began to decline.

As regards the spread of Hindu culture in Cambodia, many towns have Indian names, e.g., Tamrapura, Vikrampura, Dhruvapura, Adhyapura, etc. Hinduism was more popular than Buddhism. Many Hindu deities were worshipped in Cambodia. Hindu scriptures were studied in Sanskrit. There were recitations from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas in the temples. There are references to the frequent visits of scholars between India and Cambodia.

The art of Cambodia is of Indian origin. The most famous example of their art is the Angkor Vat which was built by King Surya-varman II in the 12th century. It is a massive structure surrounded by a canal two and a half miles long and 650 feet broad. The Angkor Vat is regarded as the grandest of monuments in Cambodia.

According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, "In the domain of art, Kambuja towers head and shoulders above the rest. A general view of the city of Angkor Thom and of the monuments roundabout it creates a solemn impression of dazzling brilliance which does not suffer in diminution on a closer examination of the remains. Indeed it may be said with perfect truth, that no other equal space on earth can show anything comparable to Angkor monuments in massive grandeur.... The Angkor Vat is justly regarded as the grandest of the monuments in Kambuja."

Angkor Thom was the capital of Kambuja which was built by Jaya-varman VII about a mile north of Angkor Vat. The town was surrounded by a high wall and just beyond it by a ditch about 110 yards wide. There were five huge gates in the wall. Each gateway was preceded by a paved causeway over the ditch. The ditch has a total length of nearly eight and a half miles and its sites are paved with enormous blocks of stones. The gateway consists of a huge arched opening more than 10 yards high and 15 feet wide with chambers on both sides. It is pointed out that the gate of the Angkor Thom is one of the most impressive and artistically superb in the whole world.

The other important monuments of Kambuja are Baphuon,

Bantav -Chmar and Bayan. They were all constructed by kings of the 12th century.

*Siam.* Hindu civilisation spread to Siam in early times from about the 2nd century A. D. The Hindus set up many colonies in Siam and the most important of them was Dvaravati which ruled from Cambodia to the Bay of Bengal upto the 10th century A. D. when it was overthrown by the Kaundinya kingdom.

It appears that Indian influence reached Southern Siam even earlier than the Christian era. Siam became an important centre of Indian culture and came to be known as Gandhara. The Hinduised Thai kingdom of Gandhara achieved the status of an empire and continued to rule for three centuries till it was conquered in 1253 A. D. by Kublai Khan, the Mongol leader.

Buddhism was introduced into Siam by the land route via Burma. We come across a large number of statues of Buddha. The people also worshipped the Devas and the spirits. A large number of images of Vishnu and Siva have also been found. A cutting of the Bo tree was brought to Siam and honoured. A large number of Bhikshus were found in the monasteries in Siam. Religious festivals even up to now follow the Buddhist and Brahmanical forms. The modern Siamese vocabulary contains many Pali and Sanskrit words. The books known were the Tripitakas, the Vedas etc. The law books of Siam seem to be mere adaptations of the Dharamsastras of the Hindus.

*Malaya Peninsula.* Inscriptions of the fourth or fifth century A. D. show that Hindu colonies had been established in the Malaya Peninsula by colonists from Northern and Southern India. One of the inscriptions refers to the colonising voyage of a navigator who came from India. The names of the states founded by the Hindu colonists during the first five centuries of the Christian era in the Malaya Peninsula were Lang-Kai-Su, Kamalanka or Karmaranga, Kalasapura, Kala and Pahang.

*The Sailendra Empire.* The Sailendra Empire was founded in the 8th century A. D. This empire comprised Sumatra, Java, Malaya Peninsula and most of the islands of the Indian archipelago. There was a conflict between the Cholas and the Sailendras. In 1025 A. D. Rajendra Chola made a successful naval attack on the Sailendra Empire and conquered many of its territories. Vir Rajendra Chola attacked the Sailendra Empire in 1063 A. D. He returned when the Sailendra king paid homage to him. The Sailendra king sent envoy to the Chola king in 1090 A.D. After a struggle lasting for a century, the Cholas gave up their attempt to control the Sailendra kingdom.

*Ceylon.* The connection of India with Ceylon can be traced back to the time of the Ramayana when Rama attacked Lanka to resume Sita. The regular colonisation of Ceylon began after the conquest of the island by Vijaya. He laid the foundations of the Sinhalese dynasty. In the third century B.C., Mohindra and his sister Sanghamitra were sent to Ceylon by Asoka. As a result of

their efforts. Buddhism was introduced into Ceylon. The ruler of Ceylon was converted to Buddhism. Slowly and slowly, Buddhism spread all over the island. It was on account of the spread of Buddhism that the cultural and political relations between India and Ceylon became very intimate. We come across a large number of Buddhist monasteries all over Ceylon.

*Burma.* Literary and archaeological evidence shows that the entire culture and civilisation of Burma was borrowed from India and not from China. Many Burmese inscriptions are written in Sanskrit and Pali. Indian religions also flourished in Burma. Many religious structures having the images of Indian gods and goddesses have been found from Burma. The art of Burma was so much influenced by the Indian art that it was said about the Ananda temple that although it was built in the Burmese capital, it was an Indian temple. Everything in the temple from Sikhara to basement has the stamp of Indian genius and craftsmanship.

*China.* The cultural relations between India and China can be traced back to very early times. It was in the second century B.C. that Buddhist texts were presented to the Chinese court by the Yueh-chi rulers. In 65 A.D., the Chinese Emperor sent ambassadors to India to get Buddhist monks known as Dharmaraksha and Kasyapa-Matanga. These monks translated the Buddhist texts into Chinese. In the 2nd century A.D., a Parthian prince went to China with Buddhist sacred books which he translated. In the second and third centuries A.D., the Yueh-chi Buddhist missionaries went to China. The most important missionary was Dharmaraksha. He knew 36 languages including Sanskrit and Chinese.

Kumarjiva was forcibly taken to China and later on he became the President of a body of 800 scholars who translated the Buddhist classics. He himself wrote more than 100 works of which 56 have survived. It is pointed out that Kumarjiva "symbolises the spirit of cultural collaboration between Central Asia and India and the joint efforts made by the Buddhist scholars of these countries for the dissemination of Indian culture in China." Kumarajiva never wanted his disciples to copy him and his last message to them was in these words: "Accept my work but do not take my life to be ideal. The lotus grows from the mud. Love the lotus and not the mud."

Gunaratna, a Brahmana from Ujjain, became a Buddhist and taught at the Pataliputra University. He was invited to China by a Chinese delegation which visited Magadha in 539 A.D. He was received with great honour by the Chinese Emperor. He died at the age of 71. He lived in China for 30 years. He translated 70 works and established numerous monasteries.

It was during the sixth century A.D. that almost the whole of China was converted to Buddhism. Bhodidharma (520 A.D.) was the teacher of the Chinese Emperor named Wu.

During the seventh century A.D., Buddhism was patronised by the Tangs. It was during this century that Hiuen Tsang visited India and carried with him to China 657 Buddhist works and trans-

lated 75 of them into Chinese. Later on, India was visited by I-tsing.

*Korea.* Buddhism spread from China to Korea in 372 A.D. Arjavarma, Buddhadharmā and other monks translated many Buddhist texts in the Korean language. By about 450 A.D., Buddhism had spread throughout Korea. A large number of monasteries were established in the country. As a matter of fact, Buddhism reigned supreme throughout Korea from sixth to tenth century A.D. In about 558 A.D., a Korean king sent a statue of Buddha and some Buddhist books to the Emperor of Japan in order to secure his friendship and alliance with the following message: "Buddhādharma, the most excellent of all the laws, which brings immeasurable benefit to its believers, had been accepted in all lands lying between India and Korea." It is pointed out that the Buddhist monks of Korea began to dabble in politics. The result was that in times of civil war, monasteries degenerated into army camps and the abbots became military chiefs. However, the monks failed to establish a theocratic Government in Korea. The result was that Buddhism lost its prestige in the country and Confucianism gained the upper hand.

*Japan.* Buddhism spread from China and Korea to Japan. From 522 to 603 A.D., Buddhism was the dominant religion in Japan. The important Buddhist sects in Japan are known as the Zen and the Nichiren. The Zen sect derived its inspiration from the Dhyana school initiated by the Bhodhidharma. The Nichiren sect is based on the Saddharama Pundarika (The Lotus of the Good Law) canon. Images of Ganesha and Vishnu have been found throughout Japan. There is some Indian influence on Japanese art.

*Tibet.* There is no definite information about any contact between India and Tibet before the 6th century A.D. From the reign of Sron-btsan-sgam-po Buddhist influence began to spread in Tibet. A large number of temples and monasteries were built. A number of Buddhist texts were translated. Images and sacred relics were brought to Tibet from India and China. The Sanskrit language was introduced. We have come across a large number of books in Tibetan translations. Many of them would have been completely lost if their Tibetan translations had not been preserved. In this manner, both Tibet and India owe something to each other.

### *Suggested Readings*

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### BUDDHIST ART

V.A. Smith points out in his "A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon" that the history of the Indian art begins with Asoka and the early Indian art is nearly all Buddhist. Asoka was a man of marked originality of mind capable of forming large designs and also executing them with the thoroughness of an autocrat. The Mauryan columns and caves were executed in honour of Buddhism which became the state religion during the reign of Asoka. The buildings constructed by Asoka have perished but we have our knowledge of the art during his reign from his inscriptions, the carvings and sculptures on his monolithic columns, certain caves and a few fragments of pottery of the Mauryan period. V.A. Smith has included the inscriptions of Asoka among the fine arts on account of their beautiful execution. He considers them as models of careful and accurate stone-cutting. The inscription on the Rummindei Pillar is as perfect today as it was when it was incised. It appears that the craft of the skilled mason and stone-cutter reached perfection during the reign of Asoka. This fact is proved by the beautifully polished surface of the monoliths and the interiors of the cave dwellings dedicated by Asoka and his son Dasaratha in the hills of Bihar.

A very large number of monolithic pillars were set up by Asoka in various parts of the country and more than 30 have been found in a more or less perfect condition. Many of these pillars have inscriptions inscribed on them. The pillar at Lauriya-Nandangarh is 32 feet 9½ inches in height. It has a diameter of 35½ inches at the base and 22½ inches at the top. This pillar is considered to be the most graceful of all the pillars of Asoka. The pillar at Bakhira in Muzaffarpur District is a massive one and is preserved in a perfect condition. The fabrication, conveyance and erection of these huge pillars required skill for which the stone-cutters and engineers of Asoka's time must be complimented. The capitals of these pillars show that the art of sculpture had attained a height of excellence. The capital of each pillar is monolithic, comprising three principal members, a bell, an abacus and the crowning sculpture in the round. There are variations in the capitals that have come down to us. In some cases, the abacus is rectangular while in some others it is circular. The edge of the abacus of the pillar at Lauriya Nandangarh is decorated by a row of flying sacred geese. The abaci of the pillars at Allahabad, Senkisa and Rampurva have designs of the lotus and palmette or honey-suckle. Whatever device is adopted, the same is well executed and chiselled with extraordinary precision and accuracy. We find the figures of the elephant, horse,

bull and lion in the topmost sculpture in the round. It is stated that a horse once crowned the pillar at Rumminder. All the four creatures are carved in bas-relief on the sides of the abacus of the Sarnath capital. The Sarnath capital is considered to be the best specimen of Asokan sculpture. The Sarnath pillar was set up at the place where Mahatma Buddha first "turned the wheel of law." The four lions standing back to back on the abacus once supported a stone wheel two feet and 9 inches in diameter but what is now left is only some fragments of it. The Sanchi capital is inferior to the Sarnath capital. It is suggested that the Bakhira pillar was set up by Asoka soon after 257 B.C.

*Stupas.* Buddhism was dominant in India during the period extending from 273 B.C. to A.D. 100 and consequently almost all the surviving monuments of this period are also Buddhist. During this period, we find a large number of stupas with their railings and gateways, monasteries, churches and Chaitya-halls. The monasteries and churches include both rock-cut and structural examples. Here and there, pillars were also set up. Most of the stupas were plain and were usually surrounded by a stone railing. The railing at Besnagar consists of oblong slabs. In the case of Bharhut and Sanchi, sculpture was freely applied to every member of the railing viz., the posts, rails and coping. At Amravati, the railing was transformed into a screen covered with stone pictures. The openings were dignified by the creation of lofty gateways (Torana). The best examples of gateways are at Sanchi.

The stupas varied in size. The stupa at Piprahwa on the border with Nepal has a diameter of 116 feet at the ground level and is about 22 feet high. The diameter of the stupa at Sanchi at the plinth is  $121\frac{1}{2}$  feet and height about  $77\frac{1}{2}$  feet. The stone railing of the Sanchi stupa is a massive structure 11 feet high.

On the Bharhut bas reliefs, two types of buildings are to be found. The first is domed and round in plan while the second is barrel-roofed and sometimes three storeyed high. The shrine of the headdress relic at Bharhut is circular in plan closed in by a low railing but otherwise open on all sides. The roof is dome-shaped and has a beautiful finial. The shrine built by Asoka around the Bodhi tree appears at Bharhut, Sanchi, Mathura and Amravati. At Bharhut, it is sculptured on the Prasenajit pillar and consists of barrel-roofed colonnade, circular in plan entirely surrounding the tree. At Sanchi, it is reproduced on the front of the left pillar and also on the outside of the lower architrave of the East gateway. It also appears at Mathura and Amravati.

We come across a large number of Buddhist monasteries. In all those monasteries, there was a big hall meant for the Sabha or meetings of the Buddhists. We also come across gateways, store-houses, kitchens, well-houses and also cells of the monks. We also come across rock-cut halls and dwelling caves at Bhaja, Kondane, Pitalkhora, Bedsa, Ajanta, Nasik, Karli and Kanheri. These have been hewn out of the very heart of the rock. They are apsidal with side aisles on either hand and are lit by a window at one end. At Bhaja,

the plain octagonal pillars rake inwards considerably. There is no decoration except bands of railing pattern and tiers of miniature Chaitya windows. The Lomas Rishi cave in the Barabar Hills



Asoka Pillar at Lauriya-Nandangarh

belongs to a group of small rock-cut cells. Its interior walls have a fine polish similar to that of the Mauryan period. There is a Chaitya-hall at Ter in the Sholapur District of Bombay Presidency. It has a long chamber, constructed of brick, 26 feet in length and



12 feet in width on the inside, with walls  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. thick, an apsidal end and a wagon vaulted ridge roof. A mutilated standing statue of a male perhaps representing the Yaksha demi-god Kavera, has been found at Parham in the Mathura District and at present is in the Mathura museum. The material is polished grey sandstone similar to that used in the Asoka pillar. The height including the pedestal is 8 feet 3 inches. The breadth across the shoulders is 2 ft. 8 inches. The body is clothed in a waist cloth (Dhoti) held around the loins by means of a flat girdle tied in a knot in front. Another girdle is bound around the chest. The ornaments are a necklace and a torque from which four tassels hang down on the back. An inscribed statue of a female 6 feet 7 inches in height has been found near Besnagar, adjoining Bhilsa in the former Gwalior State. The figure wears a heavy head-dress as found at Bharhut and Sanchi. The modelling is naturalistic. There is another colossal statue of a female at Besnagar which is 7 feet high. It is locally known as the **Telin or the oilwoman**.

**Bharhut.** In 1873, Cunningham discovered at Bharhut which is about midway between Allahabad and Jabalpur, the remains of a Buddhist stupa, surrounded by a stone railing adorned with sculptures of richness and interest. Cunningham and his assistant uncovered the ruins and saved a large number of the sculptured stones by sending them to Calcutta. The railing at Bharhut was a massive one. The pillars were 7 feet 1 inch in height and the coping stones were of the same length. The sculptures of the coping stones were devoted mainly to the representation of incidents in the Jatakas or stories about the previous births of the Buddha. The carvings on the rails, pillars and gateway related to Buddhist legends. They varied in subject and treatment. The composite pillar of the gateway, made up of four columns, is worthy of special notice. It is stated in an inscription that the Eastern gateway was erected during the rule of the Sunga dynasty. It must have taken many years to complete the work. In the Bharhut sculptures we find illustrations of the Jatakas, scenes connected with the life of the Buddha, processions of Ajatasatru and Prasenajita on their visits to Buddha, the former on his elephant and the latter in his chariot. Another sculpture is the representation of the Jatevana monastery at Stavasti, with its mango tree and temples and the rich banker Anathpindaka in the foreground emptying a cartful of gold pieces to pave the surface of the garden. There are also statues of Yakshas and Yakshinis, Devatas and Naga Rajas. The guardianship of the different gates is given to Kuvera, Devas and Nagas. There are also representations of animals, trees, boats, horses and chariots, bullock-carts, musical instruments, flags, standards and other symbols of royalty. "About one half of the full medallions of the rail-bars and the whole of the half medallions of the pillars are filled with flowered ornaments of singular beauty and delicacy of execution." The medallions on the rail bars and the half medallions on the pillars are filled with a wonderful variety of bas relief subjects. The comic monkey scenes show a sense of humour, freedom of fancy and clever drawing. There is a funny picture of a tooth being extracted from a man's jaw by an elephant pulling a gigantic forceps. These

things show that India was a happy land in the days when Buddhism flourished in the country.

**Railings at Besnagar.** We come across at Besnagar a sculptured railing similar to the one at Bharnat. The coping stone is a frieze with a frieze representing a religious procession with elephants, horses, etc. divided into compartments by the petals of a lotus stem. The piers exhibit various scenes in panels and on the cross rails elegant lotuses are carved.

**Bodh Gaya.** There is also a sculptured railing at Bodh Gaya. We come across 30 pieces, some of granite and others of sandstone. However, all of them are similar in style, irrespective of the material used. Most of the subjects are treated in low relief. The subjects on the coping are purely fanciful while those on the panels and medallions include weird centaurs, winged beasts, domestic animals, sacred trees and different scenes of human life. An animal frieze on the coping is similar to the one at Amravati. Another frieze on the coping pictures queer fish-tailed monsters. We have an interesting picture of an early Buddhist chapel enshrining the symbol of the preaching of the Law. We also come across two purely naturalistic pictures viz., an excellent buffalo and a husband and wife seated together. The treatment of the lotus is excellent. It is the most characteristic and universal of all Indian art motives. There is also the illustration of the sacred tree, surrounded by a plain railing, square in plan. There are illustrations of various fantastical hybrid creatures, winged lions and oxen, a centaur, a horse-headed female or Kinnara and frieze of the fish-tailed monsters common at Mathura and in Gandhara. These are human-bodied and appear to be half Naga and half Makara.

**Sanchi.** Many things have been found at Sanchi which was in the former Bhopal State and now in Madhya Pradesh. These were not destroyed because they were out of the path of the armies of Islam. Some injury was done by the amateur archaeologists but the same has been restored and it is rightly said that Sanchi today is a triumph of archaeological restoration. V. A. Smith points out that the importance of Sanchi in the history of Indian art rests chiefly upon four wonderful gateways forming the entrances to the procession path between the Stupa and the surrounding railing. These gateways were constructed towards the end of the first century B. C. The Southern gateway had fallen before 1810. The Western gateway collapsed between 1860 and 1880, but the Northern and Eastern gateways have never fallen. Sir John Marshall, the Director General of Archaeology in India, deserves credit for repairing all the four. The gateways or Toranas stand 34 feet high and are all substantially alike although they differ in detail. All the critics are agreed that the gateways were built in pairs and the Southern one is the earliest of the four. The capitals of its gate-posts are formed by four lions seated back to back, "indifferently carved," and of the same type as those on Asoka's inscribed pillar. There is a marked decline in the skill demonstrated by the contrast between the lions on the gate-post and those on the inscribed pillar. The capitals of the gate-posts of

the Northern and Eastern gateways have four elephants standing back to back and carrying riders. There are four hideous dwarfs clumsily sculptured, on the capitals of the Western gateway.

All the Sanchi sculptures, like the Ajanta paintings, deal with Buddhist subjects. We have weird winged figures hovering in the air, snake-headed or fish-tailed monsters emerging from their caverns or haunting the deep offering their silent homage to Buddha. Monkeys also bow down in adoration before Buddha who turned the wheel of the Law and set it rolling through the world.

In a general way, the style of the Sanchi reliefs resembles that of those at Bharhut. A specially pleasing feature of Sanchi art is the elegant bracket figures particularly that of the Woman and Tree motive. The beautiful decorative details of the pillar are worthy of careful study. V. A. Smith says: "No nation has surpassed the Indians in the variety and delicacy of the floral designs enriching their sculptures and pictures."

At the bottom of the left pillar of the Eastern Gate, we have the Yaksha guardian of the door in princely dress. His fellow stands opposite him on the other pillar. These Yakshas can be compared with the Yakshas from Bharhut. The difference is that the treatment of figure and ornament at Sanchi is considerably more rhythmic than the one at Bharhut. We have the scene of Buddha's victory over the black snake and the conversion of Kashyapa at Uruvilva. The snake and the flames of the conflict and the astonished Brahmanas are all shown. However, the figure of the Buddha is left to imagination. Below this scene, the story of the conversion of Kashyapa is continued and the incident of Buddha and the Brahman sacrifice is shown. Wood is being cut and the preparations are being made. Fire springs up and dies at the command of the Buddha. On the front of the same pillar, the final incident of the Buddha walking on the waters is told. King Bimbisara is shown arriving at the gate of Rajagriha in his two-horsed chariot. The Bodhi tree shrine is also shown. "At Sanchi, while the method of exposition and the bulk of the decorative motives are the same as at Bharhut, the canonical is very definitely to the fore and the technique has advanced considerably."

**Mathura.** Mathura is a very ancient city. It is the chief find spot of Kushan sculpture. It is linked directly with Bharhut and Sanchi. There is an abundant supply of excellent red sandstone at Rupbas and other quarries in the neighbourhood of Mathura and that helped the growth of a school of sculptors who were able to supply idols to all parts of Northern India. They prepared things for all religions. Most of the sculptures found from Mathura were used for adorning Jain and Buddhist stupas and consisted chiefly of railing pillars and medallions. The ancient motives such as the bull and the fish-elephant (Makara) are preserved. The bracket figure is a development of the "Women and Tree motive" used for the same structural purpose as at Sanchi.

Many specimens of pillars of stone railing associated with stupas have been found from Mathura. Most of these Buddhist stupas have been found on the site of Huvishka's monastery in the old Jail or



**Jamalpur mound.** The pillars have high relief statuettes usually of females, on the front and other paneled cones one above the other or floral patterns on the back. A pillar in the Mathura Museum presents a half back view of a female. A male figure, probably of a soldier, is exceptional but effectively designed. A well-executed sculpture in the Indian Museum represents a youth riding a conventional lion.

There is a seated Bodhisattava in the Mathura Museum in the traditional Yogi attitude with his right shoulder bare and the right hand raised in Abhaya Mudra. It has an inscription which reads: "For the welfare and happiness of all beings." The drapery of this Bodhisattava is excessively formal in its folds.

A standing Buddha of the Mathura school has been found at Sarnath. There is an inscription on it bearing the date the third year of the Kushanas. It can be compared to a Bodhi sattu in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. In the Sarnath sculpture, the Ushnisha seems to have been inset in the head by means of a tenon or mortice. The drapery and jewellery of these Buddhas and Bodhisattavas is purely Indian. The Buddha figure found at Mathura resembles the Gandhara sculpture in its treatment of clothing and drapery.

**Amaravati.** Many things have been found from Amaravati which is a small town on the south bank of the Krishna river in the Guntur District of Madras. This town represents an ancient city called Dharanikota. Our information about the stupa of Amaravati and its surrounding railing or screen of marble is derived from the remnants found in the British Museum or the Central Museum, Madras and Colonel Mackenzie's drawings published by Mr. Fergusson and Dr. Burgess. In its earliest form, the stupa was built about 200 B.C. although many of the sculptures are of a later date and belong to the Kushana period. It appears that all the sculptures of the railing and casing were made during 100 years between A.D. 150 and 250. Formerly, it was believed that there were two railings but the present view is that there was only one railing. However, there are two types of sculptures belonging to two different periods. In the first type, the Buddha figure is not seen but in the second type, the Buddha figure is there. The second type is also richer and most of the sculptures are of the second type. The railing was 192 feet in diameter and 600 feet in circumference. It was 13 to 14 feet high above the pavement. "It was constructed of upright slabs connected by three cross but between each pair of uprights, which stood upon a plinth and supported a coping about 2 feet 9 inches in height. On the outer face, each upright was adorned with a full disk in the centre and half disk at top and bottom minor sculpture filling the interspaces." Similar disks decorated the cross bars. The coping was ornamented with a long wavy flower-roll carried by man. There was a frieze of animals and boys on the plinth in comic attitudes. There were elaborate decorations on the inner face. Every part of the structure was covered with sculptured reliefs.

The slabs forming the casing of the lower part of the stupa were carved nicely. There were 12 slabs in each quadrant. The



principal object depicted on each slab was a highly decorated stupa with its railing. The rest of the surface was covered with an infinite variety of figures. The view of V.A. Smith is that when fresh and perfect, the Amaravati stupa must have produced an effect unrivalled in the world.

A few separate images have been found at Amaravati. Two of them are large marble statues, 6 feet and 4 inches in height. The opaque drapery is treated in a formalized style. These images are similar to the Buddhas painted on the columns in Cave X at Ajanta.

The view of Fergusson was that the sculptures of the Amaravati school marked "the culmination of the art of sculptures in India." However, this view is not accepted to-day. All critics agree with the view of Mr. Havell that the marbles of Amaravati offer "delightful studies of animal life, combined with extremely beautiful conventionalized ornament" and that "the most varied and difficult movements of the human figure are drawn and modelled with great freedom and skill." Havell says that originally the effect of the Amaravati marbles was heightened by colour and they should be regarded as "painted reliefs" rather than as true sculpture. V.A. Smith says that whether they were painted or not, they must have formed, when perfect, one of the most splendid exhibitions of artistic skill known in the history of the world.

**Gandhara Art.** The Gandhara art is also a part of Buddhist art. The Gandhara territory included the modern District of Peshawar, the valley of the Kabul river, Swat, Buner and other tribal territories as well as the western portion of the Punjab between the Indus and the Jhelum. The richest sites of Gandhara art are in the Yusufzai country to the north and north-east of Peshawar, comprising Jamalgarhi, Sahri-Bahlol, Takhat-i-Bhai and many more. Some of the best sculptures came from Swat. All the sculptures come from Buddhist sites and were executed in the service of the Buddhist religion. Gandhara school did not deal at all with Jainism and Brahmanism. The subjects treated in the Gandhara sculptures are not only Buddhist but also purely Indian. M. Foucher rightly points out that in the Gandhara art, Buddha is everywhere. Whatever be the form which he assumes, whether a charming prince, emaciated ascetic or ideal monk or by whatever name he may be called, Siddhartha, Sramana Gautama or Buddha Sakyamuni, Buddha dominates almost every composition.

The material of the sculptures is usually a blue clay slate. The stone was finished with fine plaster. The colour and gilding were freely used.

A large number of heads, sometimes made of stucco and sometimes of terracotta, have been found. They vary in dimensions from two or three inches to life size. The things found at Taxila are all stucco and clay. Moulds were used for the making of these heads. The Buddhists believed that the multiplication of the sacred images was an act of merit and no wonder there was a big demand for these heads and those were made from clay and sold at low prices.

We come across Bodhisattvas or saints on the way to become Buddhas and many minor deities of the Buddhist pantheon. Gandhara sculptures deal with subjects from the scriptures, legends and traditions of Mahayanism. From the Gandhara sculpture we have an idea of the beliefs and practices of the followers of Mahayanism. They also serve as a guide to the iconography of Buddhism. They also give us a picture of the life of Northern India during several centuries. We come across landscapes, towns, domestic interiors, streets, fields, trees and animals with unlimited realistic details. We also learn from these sculptures the furniture, vehicles, arms and tools used by the people. There are also illustrations dealing with the manners and customs of the people. The fact is that every class of the population from prince to pariah is represented in these sculptures. No subject of human interest was regarded as material unsuitable for the sculptures of the Gandhara school.

We come across the sculpture of a Buddha with long hair and moustaches. There is a sculpture of a seated Buddha in the Berlin Museum. It is considered to be one of the finest examples of the early Buddha type with coiled hair, moustaches and robe falling over the feet. A sculpture of Buddha has been found from Lorian Tangai in Swat. It is 3 feet 10 inches x 2 feet 8 inches. It represents the visit of the god Sakra (Indra) to Buddha while seated in a cave near Bodh Gaya. This sculpture is considered to be one of the most elaborate and beautiful products of Gandhara art. About this sculpture, Grunwedel observes: "The Swat sculpture represents the visit of Sakra and his retinue, with the Gandharva harper Panchasika to the Buddha while he was living in the Indrasailaguha, a cave near Bodh Gaya. The entrance of the cave is surrounded by flames to represent the glory of the Teacher, resplendent with a halo of many colours, extending to a fathom's length all round his person. Above and below, the birds, beasts, and trees indicate the isolation of the place. Indra appears as a royal personage on the right, doing reverence to the ascetic, with his parasol-bearer close behind, and the Devas (minor deities) of his train beyond on both sides. His peculiar crown or head dress is very similar to what we find also in the Mathura sculpture. The figure of the Gandharva musician on the other side has been much damaged by the fracture of the stone, but his harp is still visible."

We have many representations of Buddha in various forms. In one case, the Master (Buddha) is depicted with flames issuing from his head and the water of life from his feet. This represents the fire and water miracle (Yamaka-Pratihara) mentioned in Jataka No. 483. In another sculpture, Buddha is seated under a tree. In another, he is seated on a diamond throne. In another, he is seated on a lotus throne with the soles of the feet turned up in Yogi fashion. The right shoulder is bared. This represents the Great Miracle at Sravasti when Buddha multiplied his person in air and was heard preaching on all sides.

In the Lahore Museum, there is the sculpture of the Emaciated Buddha. It is two feet 8½ inches high. This sculpture shows the

Buddha as he sat at Bodh Gaya making efforts to attain knowledge by the severest austerities.

A large statuette has been found near Peshawar and at present it is in the Lahore Museum. It represents a royal personage seated on a throne, with his left foot on a foot-stool and his left hand grasping a spear. This has been identified as Kuvera or Vaisravana, god of riches and the King of the Yakshas who played a very important part in Indian Buddhism. This image is free from the tinge of effeminacy. Excavations at Sahri Bahlol have yielded another figure of Kuvera seated on a throne with the goddess Hariti as his consort seated beside him. It is considered to be one of the most delicately modelled works of the Gandhara school.

We have a sculpture depicting the birth of Buddha. He was born from his mother's side as she stood under a tree in the Lumbini garden (modern Rumminder). On the left is the god Indra or Sakra with his high head dress receiving the child. Behind him stand Brahma and two other unnamed gods. The woman who supports the mother is her sister. Three attendants balance the gods on the other side. The figures are thoroughly naturalistic men and women. They are so cleverly modelled and ingeniously arranged as not to interfere with one another. The draperie are treated with freedom and variety. The view of V.A. Smith is that this is the finest of the more complex stone pictures produced by the Gandhara school.

There is a sculpture relating to the story of the Great Renunciation. It shows how Buddha gave up his worldly life. There is the representation of Chandaka, the groom, leading out the horse Kanthaka ready saddled for his master's use. The modelling of this horse is better than that of the animal in Indian sculpture generally.

Another sculpture represents the worship by shaven monks of the Trisul symbol indicating the Buddha, the law (Dhamma) and the church (Samgha). There is an imperfect frieze in the British Museum about 16 inches long by 6½ inches high. It has been interpreted by M. Foucher as a representation of marine deities in a quasi-Greek fashion.

V. A. Smith points out that the general impression produced by a study of the Gandhara sculptures is that they form a class by themselves apart from the main current of the evolution of art within the limits of India. M. Foucher says that the Gandhara school of art has no direct filial relations with the earlier art of Maurya and Sunga times. The view of V. A. Smith is that the development of the Gandhara school during the first century of the Christian era was the direct result of a fresh importation into the frontier regions of Hellenistic ideas expressed in the forms then current throughout the Roman empire. The view of Cunningham was that the importation of artists and ideas was closely associated and dependent on extension of the foreign Indo-Scythian and Kushana empires as they gradually advanced their borders from the Oxus to the Ganges and possibly as far as the Narbada. However, this view is not accepted today. All the available evidence leads to the conclusion that the development and extension of the Gandhara school was done under

the patronage of the great Kushana kings who may have imported foreign artists. Those foreign artists may have been accepted as teachers by the local Indian sculptors who adapted the new methods to their own purposes. It is to be noted that the foreign elements in the Gandhara art tended to diminish with the passage of time. Generally speaking, the sculptures with a marked Greek character should be considered as belonging to the early period and those most Indianised as belonging to the comparatively later period. There are some critics who are of the view that as the Gandhara art was Indianised, its original excellence began to decay. However, this view is not accepted by the nationalist school represented by Dr. Commaraswamy and Mr. Havell. Their view is that the earliest Gandhara sculptors were no better than mechanical craftsmen, hirelings following more or less Hellenistic traditions, engaged by the frontier kings. They produced "soulless puppets, debased types of the Greek and Roman pantheon posing uncomfortably in the attitudes of Indian asceticism" and tarred with the vices of commercialism, insincerity and want of spirituality. To quote Havell, "The insincerity and want of spirituality typical of nearly all the art of Gandhara are, as I have said, most conspicuous in the earliest examples or those which are attributed to the first century of our era when the Roman influence was strongest. Two centuries later, in the sculptures of the Lorian Tangai Monastery which Professor Grunwedel describes as belonging to the best period of Gandhara, the art has become more Indian, more national and more spiritual, but it has not yet achieved the true ideal of Indian art. Since, however, it is Indian influence, Indian thought which has so far perfected the style, it is surely incorrect to say that the ideal of Indian Buddhist art has been created by foreigners. Foreign hands may have held the tools but the influences which have dominated the art have been throughout Indian." The view of V. A. Smith is that we are not entitled to denounce the Gandhara art as lacking in spirituality etc. merely because it does not express the ideas of Ellora and Elephanta. As a matter of fact, many of the good Gandhara sculptures may be fairly held to express with admirable feeling and sincerity the ideal of a saintly Indian man and to be not lacking in "restrained dignity." Smith points out that the beautiful Bodhisattva is not a "soulless puppet." There is a lot of restrained dignity in the Kuvera in the Lahore Museum. Many of the Buddhas are equal to any of the images from Java and Ceylon.

It is pointed out that the political condition in India did not allow the influence of Gandhara art to penetrate deeply into the interior of India. The Kushana empire broke up and there was a lot of anarchy in the country after that. The Guptas who came after did not include the Punjab in their territory and hence were separated from Gandhara by a foreign territory. However, it cannot be denied that the Gandhara art had great success in the Far East. It became the parent of the Buddhist art of Chinese Turkistan, Mongolia, China, Korea, and Japan. This fact is proved by the discovery of a large number of sculptures and paintings in the manner of Gandhara throughout Chinese Turkistan. The Indian



influence affected the art of China and Japan only in its application to Indian teaching. Khotan was also influenced by Indian art. Early in the 7th century, Bajna and his son, Wei-tschu-l-song, distinguished painters from Khotan, visited the Chinese court and founded the Indo-Chinese school of painting. China transmitted the Indian forms of Buddhist art to Korea and from there it passed to Japan. Prof. Grunwedel and other authors have shown that the prevalent forms of Buddhist art in the Far East originated in Gandhara.

**Gupta Art.** The Gupta art is essentially Brahmanical but there are also examples of Buddhist art during this period. Among the excellent sculptures of the Gupta age excavated at Sarnath, the most pleasing is the seated Buddha in white sandstone, 5½ feet in height. Buddha is represented with his fingers in the Mudra position. The wheel and the five adoring disciples are depicted on the pedestal. The woman with a child on the left is probably intended for the pious donor of the image. The halo is beautifully decorated. The style is marked by refined restraint. It is free from all extravagance or monstrosity. The modelling displays high artistic skill. The robe is close-fitting.

We have the sculpture of a standing Buddha of the 5th century in the Mathura Museum. It is 7 feet 2½ inches in height. It is related to the Sarnath seated image in many respects but differs in the treatment of drapery. The body is shown skilfully through the transparent garment.

There is a copper image of Buddha in the Museum and Art Gallery at Birmingham. It was originally found in the hall of a ruined monastery situated at Sultanganj on the Ganges in the Bhagalpur District and one of the discoverers took it to England and presented it to the Birmingham Museum. This image is 7½ feet in height. It is similar to the one at Sarnath. The robes on it are almost smooth and the folds are marked very faintly. The garments are transparent. The view of Rajendralala Mitra is that the material used in the image is "very pure copper", cast in two distinct layers. It was made in several sections.

At the adjoining village of Mankuwar, a very perfect seated Buddha of unusual type has been found. It has a dedicatory inscription bearing the date 448-9 A. D. It has a peculiar head dress. The webbed hand is one of the traditional marks of a Buddha according to some schools. The wheel is a symbol of the turning of the wheel of the Law by Buddha. The expression of the face differs from that of other images. The clothing is Indian waist cloth which is quite different from the robe of the ordinary Buddha.

**Ajanta Frescoes.** The subjects of the frescoes at Ajanta are almost exclusively Buddhist. They include numerous figures of Buddha and representations of secret objects and symbols. The more complex compositions deal with either the incidents of the life of Buddha or those related in the Jataka stories. Miscellaneous Buddhist subjects include the Litany of Avalokitesvara and scenes from the life of Buddha and the Wheel of Life.

Mr. Griffiths has described the masterly skill of the Ajanta artist in decorative design in the ceiling panels of Cave I in these words : "The smaller panels are ornamented with designs as varied and graceful as they are fanciful. Some with grotesque little figures, rich in humour and quaintly dressed in Persian turbans, coats, and striped stockings ; gambolling amid fruits and flowers ; dancing, drinking, or playing upon instruments ; or chattering together ; some with animals combined with the lotus, drawn with remarkable fidelity and action : as the elephant, humped bull, and the monkey ; parrots, geese, and conventional birds singly and in pairs, with foliated crests, and tails convoluted like heraldic lambrequins, showing the upper and under surface of the ornament. Some contain the large pink lotus, full-bloom, half-bloom, and in bud, as well as the smaller red and white ; some with the mango (*Mangifera indica*), custard apple (*Anona squamosa*) ; a round fruit which may be the bel (*Aegle marmelos*) or the lime (*limbu*) ; another that looks like the brinjal or aubergine (*Solanum melongena*), and many others.

"The ornament in these panels is painted alternately on a black and red ground. The ground colour was first laid all over the panel, and then the ornament painted solidly upon this in white. It was further developed by thin transparent colours over the white."

The figures of Buddha painted on the pillars of Cave X can be assigned to 5th century A. D. or a little later. The nimbus and draperies are similar to the sculptures of Gandhara. The representation in the left end of the verandah of the Buddhist Wheel of Life is interesting as an illustration of popular Buddhist teaching in the 6th century A. D. The dimensions of the Ajanta paintings are 8 feet 7 inches by 5 feet 1 inch. This was supposed to represent the legend of the landing of King Vijay in Ceylon and his coronation as described in the Pali Mahavamsa and Dipavamsa but is actually a faithful rendering of the Simhala Avadana. Cave XIX is elaborately carved throughout. Its porch and front are covered with beautiful sculpture. The paintings include many effigies of Buddha. These were considered by Mr. Fergusson to be "one of the most perfect specimens of Buddhist art in India". The numerous large wall pictures in Cave I include the Temptation of Buddha. The same subject is effectively treated in a sculpture in Cave XXVI.

About the Ajanta frescoes, Mr. Griffiths writes : "In spite of its obvious limitations, I find the work so accomplished in execution, so consistent in convention, so vivacious and varied in design, and full of such evident delight in beautiful form and colour, that I cannot help ranking it with some of the early art which the world has agreed to praise in Italy.....The Ajanta workmanship is admirable ; long subtle curves are drawn with great precision in a line of unvarying thickness with one sweep of the brush ; the touch is often bold and vigorous, the handling broad, and in some cases the impasto is as solid as in the best Pompeian work .. .....The draperies, too, are thoroughly understood, and though the folds may be somewhat conventionally drawn, they express most thoroughly the peculiarities of the Oriental treatment of unsewn cloth.....For the purposes of art-

education no better examples could be placed before an Indian art-student than those to be found in the caves of Ajanta. Here we have art with life in it, human faces full of expression, limbs drawn with grace and action, flowers which bloom, birds which soar, and beasts that spring, or fight, or patiently carry burdens : all are taken from Nature's book—growing after her pattern, and in this respect differing entirely from Muhammadan art, which is unreal, unnatural, and therefore incapable of development." (*The Paintings of the Buddhist Caves of Ajanta*, pp. 7-9).

Mr. Laurence Binyon says : "The art of Ajanta is characterized by the strong outline which marks the early Asiatic style ; the colouring appears to have been heavy and hot ; the figures and faces are animated there is force and individuality in them, a strong sense of life. We feel that the painters were possessed by their subject ; they worked with fervour and devotion..... This, and the scale of the frescoes, make a forcible and imposing impression. Yet the art of Ajanta has not passed the primitive stage. With all the feeling for life in individual figures that the painters show, they betray as yet little of that instinct by which an art develops—the instinct towards unity, towards the conception of a subject as a synthetic whole. Their compositions are crowded and incoherent. In details and in single groups and forms, on the other hand, there is grace, dignity and character.....What is lacking in the Ajanta paintings, what is so signally manifest in Chinese painting throughout its history, is that powerful creative instinct and aesthetic perception which make for synthetic unity in art, that sense of controlling rhythm and balance which inspires all fine design." (*Paintings in the Far East*, pp. 35, 50).

Buddhist art is to be found in Ceylon also. Many Buddhist Stupas or Dagabas bigger than those found in India, exist in Ceylon. The Jetawanarama stands on a stone platform nearly 8 acres in extent. The space included within the walled enclosures is about 14 acres. It is 251 feet high. The Abhayagiri Stupa is said to have been originally erected in the last century B. C. The Thuparama was built in the time of Asoka. Mr. Bell has given the following description of the Vijayarama at Anuradhapura erected in or about the 8th century for the use of the community of Tantric Mahayanist Buddhists : "Here existed a typical Sangharama, or Buddhist establishment, perfect in itself, with its shrines and meeting-hall, its priestly residences, bath-house, store-rooms, ponds, &c.

"Broadly, the monastery consisted of a raised quadrangle, 288 feet north and south by 268 feet east and west, walled, with entrances at the cardinal points, enclosing a dāraṇa and three viharas (temples), and having an open hall attached to the north. Outside this temenos was first a walk, then twelve annexes, evenly grouped, surrounded by a moat, with the chief paṇṣala (monks' residences), a bathing-house, and a few other buildings on the south and west; the whole covering an area of 12½ acres, bounded by a quadrangular wall of stone, 200 yards by 300 yards, traces of which may still be seen. From the lodge (murage) a broad street led straight to the inner quadrangle."



The Buddhist temples in Ceylon differ from the Indian temples. Ordinarily they are rectangular buildings of either brick or stone. They are frequently arranged in groups of five. Four small shrines are placed symmetrically round a larger central shrine. Shrines of the Hindu gods find an honoured place in the Buddhist buildings. Vishnu is regarded as the protector of Ceylon and is worshipped in subordination to Buddha. The Polonnaruwa shrine is considered by Mr. Bell to be "the most beautiful specimen of Buddhist stone architecture existing in Ceylon". His view is that "no photographs or drawings can adequately reproduce nor can words but faintly outline, the inexpressible charm" of the inner platform. The structure is about 80 feet in diameter. It is circular. It stands on a terrace which is circular and 125 yards in diameter. It was intended for the reception of the tooth-relic. The centre was occupied by a small Dagaba surrounded by 16 statues and two concentric circles of granite columns, 20 and 16 in number respectively.

A large number of colossal images of Buddha, seated, standing or recumbent, have been found in Ceylon. One of the oldest image of Buddha is a battered seated figure at Tantrimalai which wears a conical cap. Mr. Parker assigns it to the beginning of the Christian era. One of the best Buddhas of early age is from the Toluila ruins, Anuradhapura. There is a colossal seated image of Buddha at Pankuliy Vihara, Anuradhapura and a smaller image of Buddha at Vihara no. 2, Polonnaruwa. The largest statue of Buddha in Ceylon and perhaps the most impressive is at Awkana. It is 46 feet in height including the pedestal. It is cut from the face of an enormous boulder practically in the round being joined to the rock only by slight support. There is also a colossal standing image of Buddha at Saseruwa. The colossal standing image at the Gal-Vihara, Polonnaruwa is that of Ananda, a disciple of Buddha. It is one of the most imposing and interesting statues in Ceylon. Ananda stands watching a colossal recumbent figure of dying Buddha.

Buddhist art is also to be found in Java, Sumatra, Bali, Borneo, Cambodia, Siam, Tibet, Nepal and Central Asia. The best known monument of Java is that of Borobudur "a hill in nine stages." The importance of this monument lies in the immense series of about 2000 bas-reliefs adorning the galleries which if laid end to end, would extend more than 2 miles. The best reliefs of the panels of the so-called 2nd gallery exceeding 200 in number are arranged in two series. The upper series present in stone pictures of the life of Buddha as told in the Lalita Vistara. The scenes of the lower series illustrate the Divyavadana and other Buddhist romances, including some of the Jatakas. The intention of the designer of the monument was that the worshipper while making a Pradakshina (round) of the monument, should have a complete knowledge of the doctrines of Buddhism of the Mahayanist style.

The view of Havell is that the reliefs at Borobudur exhibit "supremely devout and spontaneous art", far excelling by their simplicity, unaffected naïveté, artistic feeling, imagination and magnificent conventionalism of the accessories the work of Ghiberti



on the bronze doors of the Baptistery at Florence which Michaelangelo declared "to be worthy to be the gates of Paradise". He further says that the simple life laid by the artists of Borobudur left them in peace to concentrate their whole soul on this work and kept their minds free and able to listen to the voices of Nature and of their own inspiration. This view is not accepted by M. Foucher who contends that the compositions of Borobudur were not prompted by the voices of nature but by a business-like systematic endeavour to give visual expression to set passages in favourite authors. There was nothing to show that the artists led simple lives. One cannot help praising the artists who executed more than two miles of stone pictures, almost uniform in beauty and skill of a very high order.

Some images have also been found in Java. There is a beautiful image of Prajna-Paramita now at Leyden. It is the name of a sacred book of the Mahayanist school. According to Havell, this image is "one of the most spiritual creations of any art, Eastern or Western".

The explorations carried out by Sir Aurel Stein, Professor Grunwedel, Dr. V. LeCoq and other savants in Chinese Turkistan lying North of Tibet to the West of China and North and South of the Taklamakan or Gobi Desert have brought to light sand-buried and other ruins of ancient civilization. Thousands of manuscripts in many scripts and many works of art, pictorial and plastic, have been found. All these show that China Turkistan was the meeting ground of Indian, Persian, Chinese and Hellenistic civilizations.

The picture of a four-armed Buddhist saint or Bodhisattava in the guise of a Persian with black beard and whiskers holding a thunderbolt (Vajra) in his left hand has been found from the remains of the 8th century at Dandan-Uiliq which was abandoned soon after 791 A.D. The four arms are a distinctly Indian feature.

At the ruined city of Idikut-i-Shahri, the German explorers found the remains of Buddhist buildings and art associated in such a way with Manichean and Nestorian buildings as to show that for centuries the followers of the rival creeds continued to live together. However, in or about the 9th century A.D., the Buddhists were massacred by the Chinese. Dr. V. Le Coq found a chamber filled with the skeletons of monks and other signs of ruthless slaughter. At this site curious votive flags, both Manichean and Buddhist, have been found with designs painted on plaster applied to long strips of cotton.

Bajna was one of the many foreign artists in the service of the Chinese Emperor, Yang-Ti (A.D. 605-17). Before him were two Indian monks at the imperial court, their names being Kabodha and Dharmakusha. Both Bajna and his son enjoyed high reputation as Buddhist artists. Buddhist pictures in China relate to religion only and nothing else. The art of Ajanta did not produce any effect on the general development of painting in China. In Japan, the only example of the imitation of the Ajanta style is the wall-painting in the temple of Horiuji at Nara of about A.D. 607.

The plastic art of both Eastern and Western India in origin and continues to be so in its essentials. We have seen that a large number of images of Buddhist saints. The effigies of devities and deities are conventional. They are often gloriously decorated with turbanes. The goddess Tara in various forms is the favourite but many other deities are also represented. In art images we come across the Bodhisattva Manjushri and his consort Sarasvati, goddess of music and poetry.

Buddhist art in India and outside made progress when Buddhism itself was making progress not only in India but also abroad. However, Buddhist art began to decline and ultimately disappeared with the decline and fall of Buddhism in India.

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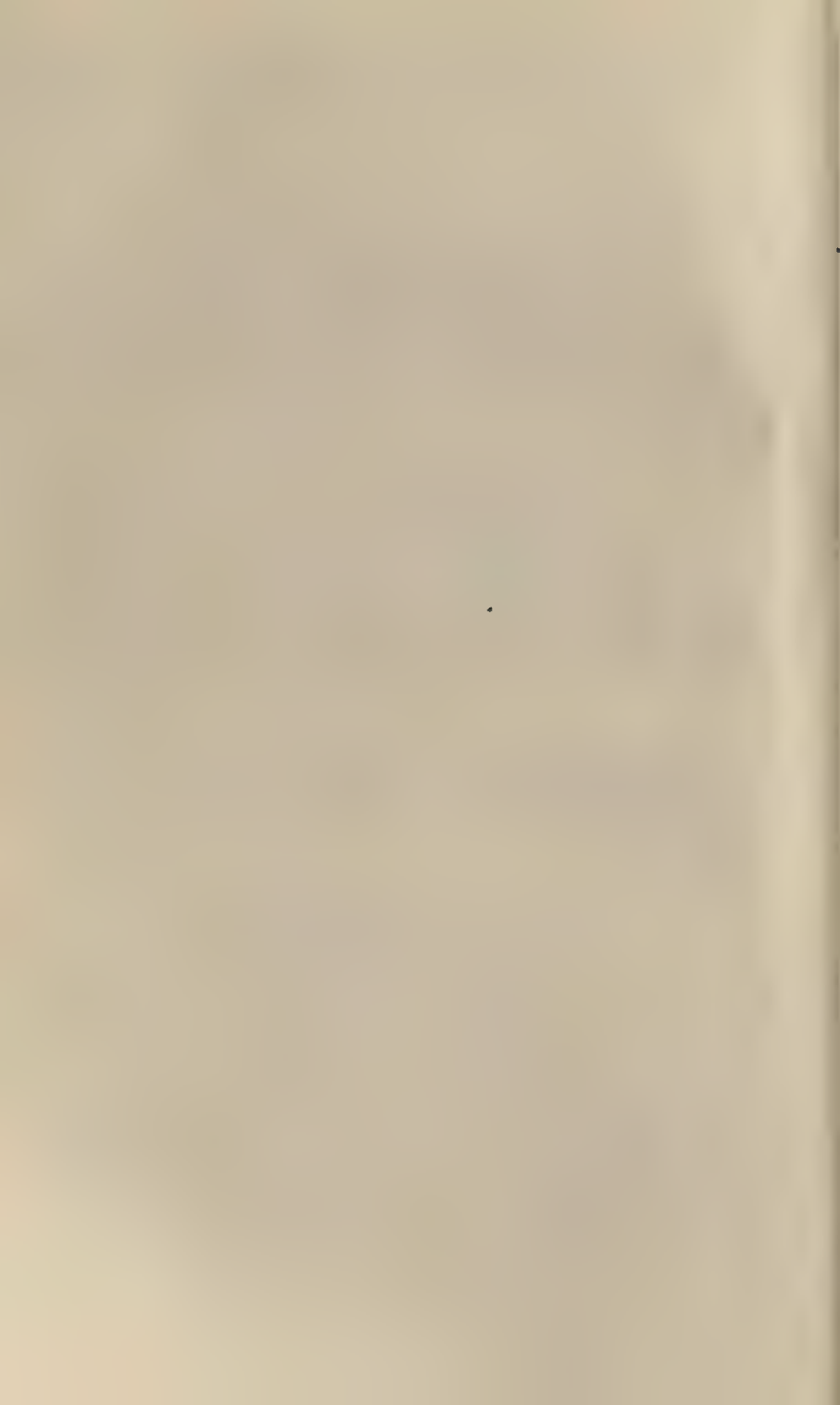
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## CHAPTER I

# The Rise of Islam

Sir Wolseley Haig rightly says that the rise of Islam is one of the marvels of history. It was in the year 622 A.D. that the Prophet of Islam was driven away from his native city but within a century, his successors and followers were able to set up an empire which extended from the Atlantic to the Indus and from the Caspian Sea to the cataracts of the Nile. It is both interesting and instructive to study the rise and growth of such a religion, particularly in India. But before we do so, it is desirable to refer to some of the important sources of information for mediæval India from the Arab conquest of Sindh up to the invasions of India by Babar.

### Sources

For the history of Central Asia and the rise of the Shansabani dynasty of Ghor, the *Kamilut-Tawarikh* of Ibnul Asir gives us a lot of information. The book was completed in 1230 A.D. The author was a contemporary to many of the events narrated in the last two volumes of his work. He used a critical judgment in utilizing his sources of information and the result was that his account has rarely been found to be wrong. As regards his notices of Indian affairs, those are remarkably correct so far as the dates and essential facts are concerned. However, those are admittedly based on hearsay. The author is valuable so far as he confirms other sources. In some places, he gives interesting explanations or details which are not to be found in other authorities.

Ata Malik Juwaini completed his *Tarikh-i-Jahan Gusha-i-Juwaini* in 1260 A.D. The book is valuable for the history of Central Asia in the first half of the 13th century. The author held a high administrative office in Baghdad under Hulaku and was also in a position to use Mongol official documents. His work gives us a detailed and authentic account of the Mongol conquests in Western Asia. Although the writer is pro-Mongol in his attitude, his account is free from inaccuracies. However, his notices of India are few and are made only in connection with either the Shansabanis or the Khwarizmi Prince, Jalaluddin.

The *Tarikh-i-Guzidah* was completed by Hamdullah Mastaufi Qazwini in 1329 A.D. It is considered to be the best general history



of the East. It contains a brief, though generally accurate, account of the Ghaznavids, Shamsabanis, and Sultans of Delhi. The author gives interesting details about the Ghorides. The value of the book is mostly corroborative.

For the early history of the Muslim conquest, the historical portion contained in the Introduction to the book of genealogies of Fakhruddin Mubarakshah known as Fakhre-Madabbir, discovered and edited by Denison Koss, is very valuable. The author was a learned man of repute in the court of Ghazni and later of Delhi. He also wrote a history of the Ghorides in verse. Although it is mentioned by Minhaj-i-Siraj, it does not appear to be extant.

The Jawamiul-Hikayat by Nuruddin Muhammad Auli contains in its Preface details of the military operations which Iltutmish conducted against Qubacha in 1227 A.D. The author was an eye-witness of those events.

The Chach-Nama was originally written in Arabic. Later on, it was translated into Persian by Muhammad Ali bin Abu Bakar Kufi in the time of Nasir-ud din Qubacha. It has now been edited and published by D. Daud-pota. This work gives a history of the Arab conquest of Sindh and is our main source of information on that subject.

The Tabquat-i-Nasiri was written by Minhaj-us-Siraj. It has been translated into English by Raverty. It is a contemporary work and was completed in 1260 A.D. It gives us a first hand account of the conquest of India by Muhammad Ghor and also the history of the Delhi Sultanate up to 1260 A.D. However, it is to be observed that Minhaj-us Siraj was not an impartial writer. He is very much biased in favour of Muhammad Ghor, Iltutmish and Balban. It is pointed out that Minhaj relied largely for example on the Ahsan Al-Ta'asim-fi-Marifat Al-Aqalam of Al Muqaddasi, the Maghazi by Al-Waqidi and the Tarikhi-Wilayat-i-Khurasan by Al-Sallami. No attempt has been made by the author to evaluate the reliability of the sources used by him. As a matter of fact, the author has occasionally given different dates for the same events in different contexts.

The Tarikh-i-Muhammadi was completed in 1438-39 by Muhammad Bihamad Khani. The author did not belong to the Ulema class but was a member of the military class. The work deals with patriarchs and prophets including the life of Prophet Muhammad, the Caliphs, Umayyids, the Abbasids, the Ghaznavids, the Saljuqs, the Sanjarids, Shamsabani Sultans of Ghor and Ghazni, Shamsi Sultans of Hind etc. It also contains the history of the Sultans of Delhi, Timur, biographies of Saints and the struggles of the Sultans of Kalpi with their Hindu and Muslim neighbours. The Tarikh i-Muhammadi is arranged in the form of annals of the life of the Prophet and the history of the early Caliphs. It is a year by year narration of events, chiefly military. After that, the arrangement is by dynasty and reign with the emphasis on military events or appointments to office. The biographies of the saints are full of praises. The author has paraphrased earlier histories without discussion or criticism.

Among the sources cited by him are the *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* by Barani and the *Tazkirat Al Auniya* by Farid-al-din al-Attar.

The *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* was written by Zia'ud-Din Barani. The author was a contemporary of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq, Muhammad bin-Tughluq and Firoz Tughluq. Barani brings the story from Balhin to Firoz Tughluq. He gives a very useful account of the history of the Slave dynasty, the Khaljis and the Tughluqs. The book was completed in 1359 A.D. and has now been published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The chief merit of the book lies in the fact that it was written by a person who held a high position in the administration and was consequently in possession of accurate information. The author has described the system of revenue administration in great detail. However, it is to be noted that although Barani knew the duties and responsibilities of a historian, he was not free from prejudice. Moreover, his style is so obscure that it is difficult to understand him.

The *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* of Shams-i-Siraj Afif deals with the history of the reign of Firoz Tughluq. The author was himself a member of the Court of Firoz Tughluq and no doubt his work is considered to be a first rate authority on the subject. The work of Afif was written not long after the capture of Delhi by Timur in 1398-9. There is no evidence in the work itself that Afif wrote either at the behest of some powerful man or in hope of reward. Afif's work is the only survival of a number of other works praising Ala-ud-din Khalji, Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq, Muhammad Tughluq and Firoz Tughluq. The book does not express the author's motives as perhaps a possible general introduction to the whole collection of **Manaqib** may have done. It is a possible hypothesis that Afif intended to portray a golden age of the Sultanate of Delhi before the calamity of Timur fell on it. Afif has praised Firoz Tughluq for his generosity towards his servants, his care for the people, his respect for the Sufis and his activities as a builder. Afif describes Firoz as an ideal man. The Sultan is depicted as a tailor's dummy garbed in ideal attributes—an exhibition figure for the edification of the pious. History is the story of what must have happened when an ideal ruler presided over the Delhi Sultanate. Historiography is a form of pious panegyric.

The *Taj-ul-Maasir* was written by Hasan Nizami. It deals with the events from about 1192 A.D. to 1228 A.D. It deals with the career and reign of Kutb-ud-din Aibak and the early years of reign of Iltutmish. Being a contemporary account, the work is regarded to be a first-rate authority on the subject. Hasan Nizami was a migrant first to Ghazni and then to Delhi, from his native Nishapur. He wrote the *Taj-ul-Maasir* after encouragement from the Sadr at Delhi in response to a royal desire for an account of the glorious deeds of the Ghorid conquerors. The work "records a minimum of events with a maximum of florid description, hyperbole, amphibology, homonym, inversion, anti-thesis, simile and rhetorical figure drawn from, for example, astrology, medicine, chess, biology and botany. Every army is as numerous as the stars, every soldier is as blood-thirsty as Mars, who carries a lance like a meteor, a sword like

lightning, a dagger like thunder-bolt and a shield like the moon. Melody and rhyme, art and artifice are preferred to economy and precision in statement. Hasan Nizami's heroes are always brave, victorious, perspicacious, generous and cultured."

The *Tarikh-i-Sindh* or *Tarikh-i-Masumi* was written by Mir Muhammad Masum. This book was written in about 1600 A.D. It deals with the history of Sindh from the time of its conquest by the Arabs up to the time of Akbar, the Great Mughal Emperor. It is not a contemporary account, but is based on *Chach-Nama*. It gives an accurate account of the conquest of Sindh by the Arabs.

The *Tahqiq-Hind* was written by Alberuni who was a great Arabic and Persian scholar. He stayed in India for many years and learnt Sanskrit. He translated many Sanskrit works into Arabic and Persian. The *Tahqiq-Hind* gives an account of the literature, religion and sciences of the Hindus at the time of his visit to India. Alberuni was a contemporary of Mahmud of Ghazni and he gives a lot of useful information about the condition of India at the time of her invasion by Mahmud. The book has been translated into English by Sachau.

The *Tarikh-i-Yamini* was written by Utbi. It deals with the history of Subuktgin and Mahmud of Ghazni up to 1020 A.D. We do not find details in this account. Dates are also missing. In spite of that, it is a great work on Mahmud of Ghazni.

The *Zain-ul-Akhbar* was written by Abu Said. It gives us some information about Mahmud of Ghazni. The data given by the author are exact.

The *Tarikh-i-Masudi* was written by Abul Fazl Muhammad Bin Husain-al-Baihaqi. It deals with the history of Mahmud of Ghazni and gives us an idea of court life and intrigues among officials.

The *Khaza'in-ul-Futuh* was written by Amir Khusrav who was a contemporary of the rulers of Delhi from Jalal-ud-Din Khalji to Muhammad Tughluq. The author was partial towards Ala-ud-din Khalji. While he praises his master very much, he omits his faults and shortcomings. Being an eye-witness of what he has written, his work is of very great importance. The work has been translated into English by Prof. Habib.

The *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* was written between 1428 and 1434 by Yahya ibn Ahmad Sarhindi. It gives a very valuable account of the reigns of the rulers belonging to the Sayyid dynasty (1414 to 1451 A.D.). The author "gives us what he himself witnessed or learnt from trustworthy observers from the time of Firozshah to the accession of the third Saiyyad Sultan Muhammad." He is "our most original authority" for the period of 35 years from 1400 to 1435 A.D. He also supplements the meagre information of *Shams-i-Siraj Afif* from about 1380 onwards. Yahya was a conscientious and exact narrator of events. His style is exceedingly simple and the work abounds in dates. Although he wrote for a patron-king, his is not a panegyrist. All later writers



have been directly or indirectly indebted to him. The whole account of the Saiyyad period in *Tabqat-i-Akbari* of Nizamuddin Ahmad is a mere reproduction of the narrative of the *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*. Badauni follows him closely. Ferishta has very often borrowed his words. The *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* does not explain why things happened in history beyond adducing the conventional dogma of divine decree. It contains morals in prose and verse, warning mankind against snares and delusions of worldly success.

The *Sirat-i-Firozshahi* was written about the year 1370 A.D. It is a contemporary account which is very useful for the reign of Firoz Tughluq.

The *Fatawah-i-Jahandari* was written by Zia-ud-din Barani. This was completed in the 14th century. The author gives his own views about the secular and religious policy of the government. The book gives an idea of the ideal political code which the author wanted the Muslim rulers to follow.

The *Futuh-al-Salatin* was written by Khwaja Abu Malik Isami in 1349 A.D. It has been edited and published by Dr. Mahdi Hussain. It runs into about 12,000 verses. It was intended to be the Shah Nama of Hindustan. The author migrated from Delhi to Daulatabad during the reign of Muhammad Tughluq. Ultimately, he found a patron in Sultan Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah, the founder of Bahmani Kingdom. The *Futuh-al-Salatin* treats the past as a succession of exciting episodes in which Muslim heroes, chiefly the Sultans of Delhi, demonstrate their qualities. The work begins with Mahmud of Ghazni and particularly praises Ala-ud-Din Khalji as a great conqueror of Hindu princes. Episodes have been mixed up with anecdotes. Divine intervention is frequent but capricious. The work is hostile to Muhammad Tughlaq. The sources of the book are anecdotes, legends and common reports current among his friends and associates.

The *Kitab-ur-Rahlah* was written by Ibn Batuta, a Moorish traveller, who visited India in 1333 A.D. and remained here for 9 years. He also acted as Qazi of Delhi for 8 years. The work is a contemporary account written by a great scholar who had first hand information about the affairs of Muhammad Tughluq.

The *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghan* was written by Ahmad Yadgar. It deals with the history of the Afghans in India. It is very useful for the rulers of the Lodi dynasty. The author commences his work with the accession of Bahlol Lodi in 1451. The last chapter deals with the defeat and capture of Hemu in 1556 A.D. The author shows little regard for dates and "at the end of the reign of each Afghan King gives fanciful and sometimes absurd stories."

Niamatulla's *Makhzan-i-Afghani* is a general history of the Afghans from the time of Adam to 1612. It was written in the 17th century in the reign of Jahangir. A distinctive feature of this book is the genealogical account of various Afghan tribes. It also contains memoir of Khan-i-Jahan Lodi, one of the greatest



generals of Jahangir. The author was a Waqia Navis at the Court of Jahangir. He was a contemporary of Ferishta, though he does not mention him anywhere in his work. He commenced his work in the year in which Ferishta finished his work (1593 A.D.). Like Ahmad Yadgar, Niamatullah also has little regard for dates and is fond of marvellous stories.

Another work of the 17th century is the Tarikh-i-Daudi of Abdulla. It deals with Lodi and Sur dynasties. It is deficient in dates and gives many anecdotes. It gives no dates but incidentally mentions Jahangir who ascended the throne in 1605 A.D. The work is disjointed and fragmentary. The Tarikh-i-Shershahi or Tobfa-i-Akbarshahi is useful for the history of the Lodi dynasty.

Fawadul Fawaid of Amir Hasan Sijzi throws illuminating sidelight on contemporary society. The poet kept daily record of the conversations of Nizamuddin, the saint of Budaun. The book contains very interesting comments on men and events around the circle of the saint. The work enjoyed immense popularity and became the model of a series of compilations. Some of the compilations are considered to be genuine and have a bearing on the society of the 13th century. Conversations of another contemporary Sufi named Faridu-din Mahmud were edited by his son under the title of Soroor-us-Sudur. Mir Khurd, a young disciple of Nizamuddin, compiled an account of the Indian Sufis of the Chishti order with the title of Siyarul Auliya. The Siyarul Arefin by Shaikh Jamali compiled in 1539 contains some additional details not found elsewhere. The Akhbarul Akhiar by Abdul Haqq Dehlavi was completed in the reign of Jahangir. It is a history of Indian mystics. Gulzar-i-Abrar by Muhammad Ghousi gives us interesting details about the lives of other Sufis. Indirectly it gives us interesting details about the social and political life of the people of the Sultanate period.

The travels of Marco Polo have been edited by Yule. It was during the 13th century that Marco Polo visited Southern India and he gives a contemporary account of what he saw in the country. Abdur Razzaq was a Persian who was an ambassador in the court of the King of Vijayanagar from 1442 to 1443 A.D. He gives us an account of the political, administrative, economic and cultural condition of Vijayanagar. Equally useful is the account of India as given by Nicolo Conti, an Italian traveller, who visited India in 1520 A.D. Paes was a Portuguese traveller who visited Southern India at that time. His description of Vijayanagar is important. Barbosa visited India in 1516 and he has left a valuable account of the conditions prevailing in Southern India.

Some Arab geographers and merchants collected information on the countries in which they were interested and with which they traded and India was one of them. That contained a lot of material which is useful for purposes of writing the history of this period.

One important thing to be noticed about the writers and poets of Sultanate period is that they were mainly concerned with the court and particularly with the Sultans. They did not bother about life

outside that narrow circle. Many of the writers enjoyed the patronage of the Sultans and could not be expected to write anything which might be unpalatable to them or the nobility. They would not mind twisting matters with a view to presenting them in a favourable light. Moreover, they had as their models the historical writings of scholars from the Islamic world. Most of them regarded historical events as subordinate to Islam. Most of them explained the events as the will of God. The view of Barani was that God had forsaken the Sultanate owing to the eccentricities of some of the Sultans. This view was not shared by writers like Afif, Isami, Amir Khusrav, etc.

There are some useful references to the events of the Sultanate period in the writings of men like Ferishta and Badauni. Sufi literature has also some useful material.

For many years, the *Prithviraja Raso* of Chand-Bardai enjoyed respect as a piece of sober history. However, recent researches have shown that its historical value is not much. Its importance lies only in the history of Hindi literature. However, *Prithviraja-Vijaya Kavya*, believed to have been written during the lifetime of the Chauhan Prince and only a fragment of which has so far been discovered, is a more dependable work. Likewise, the *Ham-mira Mahakavya* is also useful for historical purpose. It gives the achievements of Hammira, the Chauhan ruler of Ranthambor and a descendant of Prithviraja. It supplements the Muslim chronicles in a number of places and helps to form a clearer picture of the vicissitudes of Muslim hold on Rajputana. The *Surjana Charita Kavya* of Chandrasekhar is also valuable. It was written in the tenth century and it contains the history of the Chauhan family.

The stories in *Rasamala* give us a lot of useful information. The *Rasamala* is a continuous official chronicle of the ruling family of Tipperah. This work is in Bengali verse. It contains the history of Muslim rule in Bengal in the 13th century. Jain writings of 13th and 14th centuries such as *Puratana Pravandha Samgraha* and *Aitihasik Jaina Kavya Samgraha* are also valuable. They contain incidental notices of political affairs. The *Shekasubhodaya* contains a kernel of genuine history relating to early Muslim contact with Bengal in the time of Lakshman Sena. Many of the stories given in the book give us an idea of the social customs and manners of the people of that time.

Some information about the Sultanate period can be got from archaeological sources. The inscriptions of the Hindu rulers of Orissa, the Deccan and South India contain a lot of useful information on the history of those regions. They show that the Muslim Chronicles were written mostly from the point of view of Muslim rulers and they generally ignored the political activities of the Hindus who lived outside their dominions. These inscriptions have been published mostly in *Epigraphia Indica*, *Epigraphia Carnatica*, *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* and other journals. The *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* by Edward Thomas deal with the coins of that period. About the coins of this period, Lane-Poole

observes: "As a rule we may look upon Mohammadan coins as the surest foundations for an exact history of the dynasties by which they were issued. The coins of a Muslim ruler generally go far to establish those outward data in regard to his reign which oriental historians too often neglect or mis-state. The year of accession, the extent of his dominion, his relations with the neighbouring powers and with the spiritual chief of his religion are all facts for which we may look with confidence to his coins." A large number of Pagodas of the rulers of Vijayanagara and the coins of the Sultans of Madura and Bahmani kingdom give us a lot of useful information. The monuments of the Sultanate period also give us useful information about this period.

### Rise of Islam

The founder of Islam was Prophet Muhammad. He was born in 570 A.D. at Mecca in Arabia. At the time of his birth, his family was in bad circumstances. His father, Abdulla, is supposed to have been a petty merchant and to have died two months after the birth of the boy on a business trip to Madina. A few years later his mother died. The result was that he grew up under the guardianship of his grandfather and then of his uncle (Abdul Talib). The only credible testimony as to the youth of the Prophet in our possession are the following verses from the Holy Quran :

Did He not find thee an orphan and gave thee a home ?  
 And found thee erring and guided thee,  
 And found thee needy and enriched thee,  
 As to the orphan therefore wrong him not ;  
 And as to him that asketh of thee, chide him not away ;  
 And as for the favours of the Lord, tell them abroad.

When Muhammad had grown up, he entered the service of Khadijah, a rich merchant's widow. The latter was independently carrying on business. In her service, Muhammad seems to have accompanied some Meccan caravans to the South. Even at that time, he seems to have shown particular talent. His employer came to have attachment for him and she herself proposed to marry him. This marriage raised him above all material need. Four daughters and two sons were born. Muhammad took great interest in the business of his wife.

The interest of Muhammad turned to religious questions very early. He met Jews and Christians on his travels. In Mecca itself, he probably associated with the Christians. The belief in Allah filled him more and more and made him realise the emptiness of the other gods. Muhammad spent in contemplation whole nights on Mt. Hira near Mecca. The question came into his mind as to how long God was going to leave his countrymen in disbelief. God had revealed Himself to other people through his prophets. The thought ripened within him that he himself had been called to the mission of a Prophet. However, for a long time, a native shyness prevented him from appearing as a Prophet in public.



It was not until he underwent an extraordinary experience on Mt. Hira that his doubts were dissipated. A figure once appeared before him there which he later represented to be angel Gabriel and to which Muhammad ascribed the voice within which told him that he had been sent by God. His wife believed in his divine mission. He himself was rid of his doubts when the attacks during which the divine voice called him were repeated more and more often. As soon as these were over, he proclaimed as a revelation what he thought he had heard.

To begin with, he did not arouse any particular sensation among his countrymen who were accustomed to the emergence in almost every tribe of a sooth-sayer or **Kahin** or a poet who would ascribe his decisions concerning the conflicts and doubtful questions which were laid before him to his supernatural familiar (Sahib) and announced them in the same rhymed prose as the Prophet his revelations. Again and again, Muhammad had to take precautions against being placed on the same level as such people. At the core of Muhammad's oldest revelations, there was an expectation of a judgment day for each individual. He himself stood in fear of it. It was only later that he spoke of a great judgment on his entire people which would wipe off Allah's enemies, and his own from the face of the earth. In contrast to these visions of error, he then described the joys of Paradise in glowing colours. The wife and daughters of Muhammad became his first followers. They were followed by his cousin Ali, his slave Zayd and his friend Abu Bakr and Sa'd Ibn-Waqqas. His other followers at first were men of humble birth. Muhammad was on good terms with the ruling classes whose pride in the famous sanctuary of Mecca was shared by him. But when he attacked belief in the gods of their forefathers, they felt themselves affected and imperilled. They became jealous of him. They were not prepared to see a man from an inferior clan to be at the head of a community. Muhammad was forced to defend himself against the attacks of his opponents. With the passage of time, the situation became more and more serious. Things became so bad that in 622 A.D. Prophet Muhammad had to leave Mecca for Madina. The Hijri Era dates from July 622 A.D. in the memory of Prophet having left Mecca. The Prophet had to wage a life-long war for the protection of his followers and spread of his teachings. In 630, he was able to capture Mecca with the help of a large army, but he left it after a fortnight. In the spring of 632 A.D., Muhammad went on a solemn pilgrimage to Mecca. After his return, he became unwell and died on July 7, 632 A.D. His last words were : "God forgive me, have compassion on me and take me into the highest heaven."

The teachings of Prophet Muhammad are to be found in the Holy Quran. His teaching was that "there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah."

Muhammad emphasized the unity of God. He asked his followers to have faith in angels who brought messages from God.





save for Quranic texts, a Mihrab, a niche showing the direction of Mecca, a pulpit and minaret where the muazzins utter the call to prayers."

Islam or the "religion of the desert", spread rapidly in the world. After the death of the Prophet in 633 A.D., the task of the spread of Islam was taken over by the Omayyid Khalifas. During the regime of the first four Khalifas, viz., Abu Bakr, Omar, Osman and Ali, Islam spread into various parts of the world. Within a hundred years of the death of the Prophet, the Muslims overthrew two mighty Empires, viz., Sassanid Empire and Byzantine Empire. They overran the whole of Syria, Iran and Mesopotamia. To quote Gibbon, "At the close of the first century of the Hijrat, the Khalifas were the most potent and absolute monarchs of the globe." The Muslim Empire became so vast that the Khalifas had to shift their headquarters from Madina to Damascus.

In 750 A.D., a revolution was brought about by the Abbasids, the followers of Abul Abbas. The last of the Omayydis was hunted down and killed in Egypt. Abul Abbas became the founder of the new line of Khalifas. Abbas "began his reign by collecting into the prison every living male of the Omayyid line upon whom he could lay hands and causing them all to be massacred. Their bodies, it is said, were heaped together, a leathern carpet was spread over them, and on this gruesome table, Abbas and his councilors feasted. Moreover, the tombs of the Omayyid Caliphs were rifled and their bones burnt and scattered to the four winds." (H. G. Wells). In 762 A.D., the Abbasids changed their capital from Damascus to Baghdad. It is to be noted that while the Omayyids were Sunnis, the Abbasids were Shias. While the flag of the Omayyids was white, that of the Abbasids was black. Under the Abbasids, Baghdad became a centre of art and learning. The most important Abbasid Khalifas were Al-Mansur and Harun Rashid.

It is to be noted that the Arabs and the Turks played an important part in the spread of Islam. The former shaped its culture and the latter gave it ruthlessness and energy. However, it is the Arabs who were responsible for the conquest of Sindh in the beginning of the 8th century A.D. They did not succeed in pushing forward their conquests into the interior of the country. The task was accomplished by the Turks later on in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries.

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## CHAPTER II

# Arab Conquest of Sindh

### Condition of India on Eve of Arab Conquest— Political Condition

Before discussing the Arab conquest of Sindh, it seems desirable to describe the condition of India in the beginning of the 8th century. As regards political condition, there was no paramount power in the country. India was a congeries of states, each one of which was independent and sovereign. **Afghanistan** was a part of India from the time of Chandragupta Maurya. Huen Tsang tells us that in his time a Kshatriya prince ruled over the Kabul Valley and his successors continued to do so till the end of 9th century A.D. It was then that a Brahman dynasty founded by Lalliya was established. The new dynasty was called by Muslim writers as the Hindushahi Kingdom or the Kingdom of Kabul and Zabol. The exact name of the ruler who was ruling Afghanistan at the time of the Arab conquest of Sindh is not known.

As regards **Kashmir**, Durlabhavardhana founded a powerful Hindu dynasty in the 7th century. It was during his reign that Huen Tsang visited Kashmir. He was succeeded by Pratapaditya who built the town of Pratapapur. Lalitaditya Mukatapida who ascended the throne about 724 A.D., was the greatest ruler of the dynasty and he is said to have conquered the Punjab, Kanauj, Dardistan and Kabul. It was during his reign that the Martand temple dedicated to the Sun god was built. Yasovarman, the King of Kanauj, was defeated by him about the year 740 A.D.

During the 7th century A.D., **Nepal** occupied the position of a buffer state between Tibet on the North and the empire of Harsha of Kanauj on the South. King Amsuvarman, founder of the Thakuri dynasty, was in close touch with Tibet on account of the marriage of his daughter to the ruler of that country. After the death of Harsha, troops from Tibet and Nepal helped Wang-hieuntse, the Chinese envoy, against Arjuna, the usurper on the throne of Kanauj. At the beginning of the 8th century, Nepal was still dependent on Tibet. It was only in 703 A.D., that Nepal became independent.

As regards **Assam**, its ruler was Bhaskar-varman in the time of Harsha. He asserted his independence after the death of Harsha. It



appears that his independence did not last long. Bhaskar-varman was defeated by Silastambha, a barbarian and Assam passed under the rule of the Malechhas for nearly 300 years.

As regards **Kanauj**, Arjuna usurped the throne of Kanauj after the death of Harsha. He opposed the Chinese mission under Wang-hieun-tse which arrived after the death of Harsha. The members of the mission were either massacred or taken prisoners and their property was plundered. Wang-hieun-tse managed to escape to Nepal and he came back after getting help from Nepal, Tibet and Assam. Arjuna was defeated and taken prisoner and carried away to China as a captive. There was a struggle for supremacy. For some time, the Pratiharas of Kanauj became supreme. Later on, their place was taken by the Palas. The Rashtrakutas held sway towards the west and south of the Deccan. Early in the 8th century, we find Yasovarman on the throne of Kanauj. On account of his enterprising spirit, he was able to restore Kanauj to its former glory. He was a contemporary of King Dahir of Sindh.

Sindh was ruled by a Sudra dynasty and when Hieun Tsang visited India, he found a Sudra ruler in that region. Although Sindh was subdued by Harsha, it became independent after his death. The last Sudra ruler was Sahsi. He was succeeded by Chacha, his Brahman minister, who established a new dynasty of his own. Chacha was succeeded by Chandra who in turn was succeeded by Dahir. It was this king who had to face the Arabs in Sindh.

As regards **Bengal**, Sasanka was a contemporary of King Harsha. After his death, there was anarchy in Bengal. It was in 750 A.D., that the people selected a person named Gopala as their ruler. Gopala ruled from 750 A.D. to 770. The dynasty founded by Gopala continued to rule up to 12th century A.D. The important rulers of the dynasty were Dharmapala, Devapala and Mahipala.

The earliest known settlement of the **Pratiharas** was at Mandor in Central Rajputana. It was there that the family of Harichandra ruled. A branch advanced southwards and established its power at Ujjain. Dantidurga, the Rashtrakuta king, is stated to have subjugated the Gurjara chief. Before their conquest of Kanauj, the Pratiharas were the masters of Avanti. Nagabhata I is stated to have crushed the large armies of the Malechha king. He was responsible for saving western India from the Arabs. Both Nagabhata I and Dantidurga tried to take advantage of the confusion created by the Arabi raids and although Dantidurga got some initial advantage, he could not maintain the same for long. In spite of his initial failure, Nagabhata I was able to leave behind a powerful state comprising Malwa and parts of Rajputana and Gujarat.

According to Dr. Altekar, the **Rashtrakutas** were either the direct or collateral descendants of the Rashtrakuta king, Nannaraja Yudhasura, who ruled at Elichpur in Berar in the middle of the seventh century A.D. The Rashtrakutas began their career of greatness under Dantidurga. He fought on the banks of the Mahi, Mahanadi and Reva and won victories over Kanchi, Kalinga, Kosala, Malava, Lata

and Lanka. He performed the Hiranvagarbha ceremony at Ujjain in which 'kings such as the Gujjara Lords and others were made deities keepers'. He defeated the Chalukya kings and also won victory over Vallabhi. He is said to have wrested supreme authority from the Chalukyas and 'humbled the circles of proud kings from the Himalayas to the limit of Setu.' Dantidurga was ruling when the Arabs attacked Sindh.

Pulakesin II, the greatest king of the **Chalukya dynasty**, was a contemporary of Harsha. In 685 A.D., Vikramaditya I came to the throne and he continued to rule up to 681 A.D. His son Vijayaditya ruled from 681 to 696 A.D. He was succeeded by Vijayaditya who ruled from 696 to 733 A.D. He conquered Kanchi and levied tribute from the Pallava king. He was ruling at the time of the Arab conquest of Sindh.

Narasimha varman II was the ruler of the **Pallavas** at the time of the Arab conquest of Sindh. He ruled from 695 to about 722 A.D. He took up the titles of Rajasimha (Lion among Kings), Agamapriva (Lover of scriptures) and Shankarbhakat (Devotee of Siva). He built the Kailashnath temple at Kanchi.

It is clear from a brief survey of the political condition of India on the eve of the Arab conquest of Sindh that there was no one powerful force in the country which could check effectively the Arab conquest of Sindh. There was no sense of unity which could bring together the various states of India in the face of a common danger. The clash of arms was not between people with any sense of territorial patriotism but between the loyal or mercenary personal adherents of ambitious monarchs.

### Administration

As regards the **administrative** system, monarchy was the most popular. The law of primogeniture was usually followed. Sometimes rulers were also elected. We are told that Gopala, the founder of the Pala dynasty, was elected by the important political elements of the region. At the time of a crisis, a ruler was selected by the important persons in the State. Such a thing happened in the case of King Harsha of Thanesar and Kanauj. We have many examples of women being rulers in certain parts of India. The kings exercised unlimited and absolute powers and also believed in the Divine Right of Kings to rule. The king was the head of the executive, the Commander of the Army and the fountain of justice. He could not afford to be a tyrant as he was required to rule according to Raj-dharma.

As it is impossible to rule without assistance, the king was helped by ministers. Their number depended upon the circumstances and requirements of the situation. There seem to have been two kinds of ministers known as Mantrins and Sachivas. The names of some of the ministers were Sandhivigrahika (Minister of War & Peace), Sumant (Foreign Minister), Mahadandanayaka, Mahabaladhikrita, Amatya, Akshapatadhikrita etc. In addition to the above mentioned ministers, there was a Purohita or Rajguru who was in charge of the department of religion. The position of a minister depended upon his own

character, brilliance and the amount of confidence reposed by the king in him. The office of a minister became sometimes hereditary in particular family. In the ultimate analysis, everything depended upon the attitude of the king towards the ministers.

Every kingdom was divided into many provinces known as Bhukti in the North and Mandala in the South. The terms Rashtra or Desa are also used in this connection. Every province was under the charge of an officer called Uparika. A province was divided into many districts known as Vishyas and each Vishya was under a Vishyapati. Districts were further divided into unions of villages and the village was the unit of administration. Each village had a headman and a Panchayat consisting of the elders of the village. In every Panchayat, there were many sub-committees to look after the various needs of the village. The headman of the village was known as Adhikari or Adhikarin. A city was under a Nagarpati who was assisted in some cases by an assembly elected by the residents of the city. The main sources of income of the state were land revenue from the crown lands, tributes from vassal chiefs and taxes such as excise duties, irrigation charges, road cess, ferry charges, income from mines etc. The share of the State from land was fixed at 1/6th of the produce and was known as the Bhag.

### Religious Condition

As regards the **religious condition**, it is true that Buddhism was on the decline but it had its followers in Bengal and Bihar even up to the times of the Pala and Senas. The great Buddhist academy of Vikramashila, with its 107 temples and 6 colleges, was established by Dharampala who ruled from 770 to 810 A.D. Jainism survived longer, particularly in the south. In all the principal dynasties of the south, there were some patrons of Jainism. It flourished in the dominions of the Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Gangas and Hoysalas till the rise of Vaishnavism and Saivism. Kumarila Bhatta, Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya and Madhavacharya were the outstanding religious teachers who brought about a change in the spiritual outlook of Hindu Society. The revived Hinduism was a potent faith. Most of the rulers were followers of Hinduism but they were tolerant to all other religions. There was no religious persecution as such.

### Social Condition

As regards the social condition, caste system was becoming more and more rigid. We have references to Brahmanas working as soldiers and the Kshatriyas working as merchants. We have also references to Vaishyas and Sudras as powerful rulers. There were restrictions on inter-caste marriages and in most cases people married within their castes. Most of the people were vegetarians and they abstained from taking even onions or garlic. Untouchability was prevalent. There was polygamy in the Hindu society, but women were not allowed to marry a second time. **Sati** was becoming popular. Education was widely spread. There were many universities and colleges where all kinds of knowledge was given. In spite of this, the lives of the most of the people were controlled by superstition. On the whole, the Hindu social system, with its various divisions and



mutual jealousies, was not strong enough to withstand the Mohamadan onslaught.

### Arab Conquest of Sindh

It is true that Sindh was actually conquered by the Arabs in 712 A.D., but it does not mean that no efforts had been made earlier in that direction. We are told that in 636-37 A.D., during the Khalifat of Omar a naval expedition was sent for the conquest of Thana near Bombay, but it failed. Another attempt was made in 644 A.D. by land through the Makran Coast into Western Sindh. The expedition was sent by Khalifa Osman under the leadership of Abdullah bin-Amar. The latter conquered Sistan and then advanced towards Makran. He defeated the ruler of Makran and Sindh. In spite of these victories, it was not considered worthwhile to annex Sindh. It was reported to the Khalifa that in Sindh "water is scarce, the fruits are poor, and the robbers are bold : if a few troops are sent, they will be slain, if many, they will starve." In spite of difficulties, the Arabs continued to attack the frontiers of Sindh both by land and sea. They concentrated their attacks on Kikan which was a hilly region round the Bolan Pass. Al-Haris won some success in 659 A.D. but was ultimately defeated and killed in 662 A.D. Another successful attempt was made by Al-Muhallab in 664 A.D. Abdullah made an unsuccessful attempt and he was killed. Ultimately, the Arabs were able to capture Makran or Baluchistan in the first decade of the 8th century A.D. and this prepared the way for the conquest of Sindh.

### Causes

It is stated that the Arabs were provoked to undertake the conquest of Sindh in 711 A.D. Various reasons have been given for that. One view is that King of Ceylon was sending to Hajjaj, the Viceroy of the Eastern provinces of the Khalifa, orphan daughters of the Muslim merchants who had died in his dominions and his vessels were attacked and plundered by pirates off the coast of Sindh. According to another account, the King of Ceylon had himself embraced Islam and was sending troops and valuable presents to the Khalifa and those were plundered off the coast of Sindh. According to still another account, the Khalifa had sent agents to India to purchase female slaves and other commodities and those agents, on reaching Debal, the principal sea-port of Dahir, were attacked and plundered by pirates. The Khalifa demanded reparations from Dahir, the ruler of Sindh, but the latter refused to do so on the ground that the pirates responsible for the plunder were not under his control and consequently he was not responsible for the payment of compensation. However, the real cause of the Arab invasion of Sindh was the determination of the Arabs to conquer Sindh with the object of spreading Islam and also enriching themselves with plunder. The Arab conquest of Sindh was merely a part of their general aggressive policy which brought under them vast regions in Western Europe, Africa and Europe.



An expedition under Ubaidullah was sent in 711 A.D. but he was himself defeated and killed. Another expedition was sent under Buddai, but that also failed. It was under these circumstances that an expedition was sent in 712 under Mohammad-bin-Qasim to conquer Sindh.

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "The story of Mohammad-bin-Qasim's invasion of Sindh is one of the romances of history. His blooming youth, his dash and heroism, his noble deportment throughout the expedition and his tragic fall have invested his career with the halo of martyrdom." Mohammad Qasim started as the head of an army consisting of 6000 Syrian horse, the flower of the armies of the Caliphs, 6,000 cavalry and a baggage train of 3,000 Bactrian animals. He had reinforcements from the Governor of Makran. Mohammad Harun brought with him 5 catapults or Balistas which served as mediaeval artillery. Each catapult was worked by 500 trained men and thus the total of artillery men was 2,500. Abdul Aswad Jahan had been sent in advance to join Mohammad Qasim on the border of Sindh. The army of Mohammad Qasim continued to increase till it was 50,000 strong when it marched down to Multan.

### Debal

From Makran, Mohammad-bin Qasim proceeded to Debal. On the way, the Jats and Meds joined him against Dahir. It was in the spring of 712 A.D. that he reached the port of Debal and besieged it. A nephew of Dahir was in charge of the town and he offered stiff resistance. It is stated that Brahmanas of Debal prepared a talisman and placed it near the great red flag which flew from the temple. The Arabs were not able to conquer Debal in spite of best efforts. However, a Brahman deserted Dahir and disclosed the secret of the talisman to the Arabs. The result was that the Arabs made the flagstaff the target and broke the talisman. Once the red flag was pulled down, the people surrendered in despair. There was a great massacre for three days. The Hindus and Buddhists of Debal were given the option to become Muslims and those who refused to do so were murdered or enslaved. All those who were above 17 were put to the sword. Huge booty fell into the hands of the Arabs. "700 beautiful females under the protection of Buddha" were among the prize of Mohammad-bin-Qasim. A part of the booty and women were sent to Hajjaj and the rest were distributed among the soldiers. A mosque was constructed in place of the damaged temple. Mohammad-bin-Qasim wrote thus to Hajjaj: "The nephew of Raja Dahir, his warriors and principal officers have been dispatched, and the infidels converted to Islam or destroyed. Instead of idol-temples, mosques and other places of worship have been created. Khutbah (Friday prayer) is read, the call to prayer is raised, so that devotions are performed at stated hours. The Takbir and praise to the Almighty God are offered every morning and evening."

### Nerun

From Uchhal, Mohammad-bin Qasim advanced to Nerun. It was then in the hands of Buddhist priests and Sramanas. The Buddhists surrendered without a fight. They argued thus. "We are a priestly class; our religion is peace. According to our faith, fighting and slaughter are not allowable."

### Schwan

From Nerun, the Arabs marched on Schwan which was held by a cousin of Dahir named Bajhra. He surrendered after some feeble resistance. No general massacre of the people of Sehwan was ordered.

### Dahir

Mohammad bin-Qasim ordered a bridge of boats to be constructed in order to cross the Indus. Dahir was taken by surprise and with his men he fell back upon Rawar. It was here that the Arabs met an imposing array of war elephants and a powerful army thirsting to give battle to the Muslims. Dahir was seated on an elephant. His frightened elephant took him into the river Indus. Although the king saved himself and continued to fight after mounting a horse, the army thought that they had lost their leader and fled away. Ultimately, Dahir was defeated and killed. Rantbai, the widow of Dahir, put up a heroic defence from the fort of Rawar and her garrison 15,000 strong, rained stones and missiles on the Arabs. When they could not hold out, they saved their honour by performing the ceremony of Jauhar.

### Brahmanabad

From Rawar, Mohammad-bin-Qasim proceeded towards Brahmanabad which was defended by Jai Singh, the son of Dahir. The fighting was bitter. As many as 8,000 or 20,000 persons were killed. When Jai Singh found that further resistance was useless, he retired from Brahmanabad. It was after the fall of Brahmanabad that Mohammad-bin-Qasim captured Rani Ladi, another widow of Dahir and his two daughters Suryadevi and Parmal Devi.

### Aror

Aror, the capital of Sindh, was held by another son of Dahir. It was stoutly defended for some time. It was in this way that the conquest of Sindh was completed.

### Multan

Mohammad-bin-Qasim proceeded towards Multan, the chief city of the Upper Indus. There was tough resistance everywhere, but in spite of that he appeared before the gates of Multan and captured it through treachery. A deserter told him the stream from which the people got their water-supply and by cutting off the same, Mohammed-bin-Qasim was able to capture Multan. The Arabs got so much of gold that they named Multan as the city of gold.

After capturing Multan, Mohammad-bin-Qasim began to draw a plan of conquering the rest of India. He sent an army of 10,000 horses under Abu Hakim to conquer Kanauj. However, before that could be accomplished, Qasim himself was finished.

### Death of Qasim

There is a difference of opinion with regard to the circumstances which led to the death of Mohammad-bin-Qasim. One view is that Surva Devi and Parmal Devi, the daughters of Dahir, were sent to the Khalifa as presents from Qasim. The Khalifa selected Surva Devi for the honour of sharing his bed but she stated that she was not worthy because Qasim had dishonoured her and her sister before sending them to the Khalifa. This annoyed the Khalifa who wrote with his own hand directing that Mohammad-bin-Qasim should suffer himself to be sewn up in a raw hide and thus despatched to the capital. When the order reached Mohammad-bin-Qasim, it was at once obeyed. He caused himself to be sewn up in the hide and thus the box containing his body was sent to Damascus. When the box was opened in the presence of Surya Devi and the Khalifa, the Khalifa pointed out to the dead body as evidence of the obedience which he was able to get from his servants. However, Surya Devi told the Khalifa at that time that her charge against Mohammad-bin-Qasim was false and she had merely invented the story to have revenge against him. The Khalifa was so much annoyed that he ordered both the sisters to be tied to the tails of horses and dragged till they died.

Another view is that there were two rival groups in the court of the Khalifa and one group was opposed to Hajjaj whose cousin and son-in-law was Mohammad-bin-Qasim. The rivals of Hajjaj poisoned the ears of the Khalifa against Qasim and orders were passed to torture him to death.

The work of conquest of Sindh started by Mohammad-bin-Qasim was cut short by his death. The Khalifa also died in 715 A.D. Under his son, Omar II, Jai Singh, the son of Dahir, became a convert to Islam. However, even his conversion did not save him. Junaid, the Governor of Sindh under Khalifa Hisham (724-43 A.D.), invaded his territory and killed him. In 750 A.D., there was a revolution at Damascus and the Omayyids were replaced by the Abbasids. The control of the Khalifas became more and more loose and the governors and chiefs of Sindh became more and more independent. By 781 A.D., the authority of the Khalifa in Sindh became virtually extinct. The Arab chiefs established two independent kingdoms, one on Mansurah or Sindh proper up to Aror on the Indus and the other comprising Multan.

### Administration

The provinces of Sindh and Multan remained parts of the empire of Khalifa for about 150 years. During that period, the Arabs had to carry on the administration of those territories. In the first flush of victory of Debal, Mohammad-bin-Qasim acted like a Muslim

conqueror in an infidel country. The vanquished were given the choice to become Muslims and those who refused to do so were either put to the sword or enslaved. The women and treasures were appropriated. After Debal, a policy of partial toleration was followed. The privileges of the *Zimmi* (Hebrews and Christians) were given to the Hindus and Buddhists of Sindh. The mosques were built on the ruins of the temples. The infidels were also taken into civil and military service. Hindu women were married. Lands were restored to some of the native chiefs without forcing them to become Muslims. Idolatry was connived at. Some idols instead of being destroyed were sent to Hajjaj as curios along with other gifts. The new policy was stated in these words: 'The temples shall be inviolate like the churches of the Christians, the synods of the Jews and the altars of the Magians—subject to the *Jizya* and other taxes'.

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, Hajjaj was "a bitter persecutor" and "knew nothing of the lax interpretation which tolerated idolatry on payment of a tribute." If we believe the account given in the *Chachanama*, even Hajjaj had to change his mind. The people of Brahmanabad appealed to Mohammad-bin-Qasim, and Hajjaj's reply was: "As they have made submission and have agreed to pay taxes to the Caliph, nothing more can be properly required from them. They have been taken under our protection and we cannot, in any way, stretch our hands upon their lives or property. Permission is given to them to worship their gods. Nobody must be forbidden or prevented from following his own religion. They may live in their houses in whatever manner they like." Mohammad-bin-Qasim passed the following orders: "Deal honestly between the people and the Sultan, and if distribution is required, make it with equity, and fix the revenue according to the ability to pay. Be in concord among yourselves and oppose not each other, so that the country may not be distressed."

The Arabs got a lot of booty from Sindh. They carried away *maunds* of gold to their country. In addition to that, the people were heavily taxed, particularly those who did not become Muslims. The annual income from Sindh and Multan was estimated to be 1½ crores of Dirhams (£270,000). A lot of money was realised by the imposition of *Jizya* which was levied in three grades, *viz.*, 48 Dirhams, 24 Dirhams and 12 Dirhams. The distinction was made on the basis of the social status of the person taxed and also his ability to pay. Children and women were exempted. The *Khiraj* or land tax was levied according to produce. It amounted to two-fifths of wheat and barley in the lands watered by public canals and it was one-fourth in other cases. The state demand was one third in the case of garden produce like grapes and dates. It was one-fifth on fish, wine and pearls. Taxes could be increased in case of necessity. According to Elliot, "With the progress of luxury, the wants of people and its servants increased, and the zeal diminished: so that it became requisite to employ more people and to give them higher pay. Consequently, the taxes were gradually increased till the proprietors and working classes



were unable to pay them, which led to continual changes in the Government."

The Arabs divided Sindh into a number of districts called Iqtas and an Arab military officer was put in charge of a district. The officers in charge of the district were given a lot of discretion in the matters of administration but were required to render military service to the governor. Soldiers were given lands as Jagirs. Endowments of lands were also given to Muslim saints and scholars. A large number of military colonies came into being. The names of some of those colonies were Mansura, Mahfuza and Multan. The people of Sindh were allowed to manage their local affairs.

Rough and ready justice was given to the people. There was no uniformity of law or uniformity of courts. Everything was haphazard. The Arab chiefs were allowed to have their courts and they could inflict capital punishment on their dependants. There was a Qazi at the capital and there were similar Qazis in the district towns. They all decided cases according to Islamic law. Punishments for the Hindus were very severe. If a Hindu committed a theft, he was burnt to death. In some cases, even the members of his family were also burnt to death. The Hindus decided their disputes regarding marriage, inheritance and other social matters in their Panchayats.

The lot of the common people of Sindh was not happy. They were not allowed to put on good clothes or to ride on horses. They could not cover their heads or feet. They were required to get themselves branded on their head. They were required to feed every Muslim traveller for three days and nights. They were made to submit to many other humiliations. Only those persons gained who became Muslims as they were treated better.

### Effects of Arab Conquest

According to Stanley Lane-Poole, "The Arabs had conquered Sindh but the conquest was only an episode in the history of India and of Islam, a triumph without results." According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "Of the Arab conquest of Sindh, there is nothing more to be said. It was a mere episode in the history of India and affected only a small portion of the fringe of that vast country. It introduced into one frontier tract the religion which was destined to dominate the greater part of India for nearly five centuries, but it had none of the far-reaching effects attributed to it by Tod in the *Annals of Rajasthan*. Mohammad-bin-Qasim never penetrated to Chitor in the heart of Rajputana; the Caliph Walid I did not render tributary all that part of India on this side of the Ganges; the invader was never on the eve of carrying the war against Raja Harchund of Kanauj much less did he actually prosecute it; if Harun-ur Rashid gave to his second son, al-Ma'mun, 'Khorasan, Zabulistan, Cabulistan, Sindh and Hindustan', he bestowed on him at least one country which was not his to give; nor was the whole of northern India, as Tod maintains, convulsed by the invasion of the Arabs. One of

these, as we have seen, advanced to Adhol in Cutch, but no settlement was made, and the expedition was a mere raid, and though the first news of the irruption may have suggested war-like preparations to the princes of Rajasthan their uneasiness cannot have endured. **The tide of Islam, having overflowed Sindh and the lower Punjab, ebbed, leaving some jetam on the strand.** The rulers of states beyond the desert had no cause for alarm. That was to come later, and the enemy was to be, not the Arab, but the Turk, who was to present the faith of the Arabian prophet in a more terrible guise than it had worn when presented by native Arabians." (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 10).

According to Prof. Habibullah, "The Arab was not destined to raise Islam to be a political force in India. Whatever its cultural implications, politically the Sindh affair led to a dead end. It touched only a fringe of the Indian continent and the faint stirrings it produced were soon forgotten. In the Islamic Commonwealth the Arab soon began to lose ground; geography stood in the way of his expansion in India: and by the tenth century, his conquering role having been played out, the Indian princes recognised in him only the enterprising and adaptable merchant of old." (*Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 2.)

When the Arabs settled in Sindh, they were dazzled by the ability of the Indians. Instead of influencing them, they were themselves influenced by them. The Arab scholars sat at the feet of the Brahmanas and Buddhist monks and learnt from them philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, chemistry, etc., and later on transmitted the same to Europe. It is contended that the numerical figures which the Europeans learnt from the Arabs were originally learnt from the Indians. The Arabic name for figure, **Hindsa**, points out to its Indian origin. During the Khilafat of Mansur in the 8th century A.D., Arab scholars went from India to Baghdad and they carried with them the *Brahma Sidhanta* and *Khandakhandvaka* of Brahma Gupta and those were translated into Arabic with the help of Indian scholars. The Arabs also learnt from them the first principles of scientific astronomy. Hindu learning also was encouraged by the ministerial family of Barmaks during the Khilafat of Harun from 786 to 808 A.D. They invited Hindu scholars to Baghdad and asked them to translate Sanskrit books on medicine, philosophy, astrology etc., into Arabic. They also put the Hindu physicians in charge of their hospitals.

According to Havell, from a political point of view, Arab conquest of Sindh was a comparatively insignificant event but its importance on account of its effect upon the whole culture of Islam was great. For the first time, the nomads of the Arabian desert found themselves in the holy land of the Aryans in close contact with Indo-Aryan civilization, which from all points of view politically, economically and intellectually had reached a far higher plane than their own. To the poetic imagination of the Arab tribesmen, India seemed a land of wonders. In all the arts of peace, India then stood at the pinnacle of her greatness. The Arabs were charmed by the

skill of the Indian musicians and the cunning of the Hindu painter. The dome of the temple **Mandapam** became the dome of the Muslim mosque and tomb. The simplified symbolism of Muslim ritual was all borrowed from India. The pointed arc of the prayer carpet and **mihrab** was a symbolic arc of the Buddhist and Hindu shrines. The cathedral mosques of the Muslim royalty were like the Vishnu temple. The entrances of the mosque corresponded to the temple Gopuram and gates of the Indian villages. The Minars of the mosques were adaptations of the Indian towers of victory. Havell points out that in Sindh, the Arab Shaikhs had their first practical lessons in Indo-Aryan statecraft under the guidance of their Brahman officials. They learnt to adapt their own primitive patriarchal policy to the complicated problems of the highly organised systematic government evolved by centuries of Aryan's imperial rule. The court language, etiquette and literary accomplishments were borrowed from the Iranian branch of Aryan civilisation. All these scientific elements which made the Arabs famous in Europe were borrowed directly from India. Islam was able to tap the inexhaustible resources of India, spiritual and material and became the agent for their distribution over the whole of Europe. The Indian Pandits brought to Baghdad the works of Brahmputra and those were translated into Arabic. In the palmy days of the great Harun, the influence of Indian scholars was supreme at the Baghdad court. Hindu physicians were brought to Baghdad to organise hospitals and medical schools. Hindu scholars translated Sanskrit works into Arabic. The Arabs also went to Indian universities for acquiring knowledge. Havell points out that **it was India and not Greece that taught Islam in the impressionable years of its youth, formed its philosophy and esoteric religious ideals and inspired its most characteristic expression in literature, art and architecture.** The Arabs never won for themselves a permanent political footing in India nor did the Western School of Islam ever take any strong hold upon the mentality or religious feelings of the Indian Muslims.

It is wrong to maintain that the Arab conquest of Sindh had absolutely no effect on India. It cannot be denied that the Arab conquest of Sindh sowed the seed of Islam in India. A large number of persons in Sindh were converted to Islam. The footing got by Islam in Sindh proved to be permanent. It is pointed out that the legacy of the Arab conquest of Sindh lies in the "debris of ancient buildings which proclaimed to the world the vandalism of the destroyer or a few settlements of a few Muslim families in Sindh as the memorial to Arab conquest of Sindh."

### **Causes of Arab Success**

It is desirable to refer to some of the causes which were responsible for the initial success of the Arabs in Sindh. The people of Sindh did not present a united front to the invaders. There were Buddhists and Jains in Sindh and they had a grievance against Dahir, the Hindu ruler. The result was that they joined hands with the invaders against Dahir. Moreover, the Jats, Meds and certain other orders of the society also had their grievances

against the Hindu ruler of Sindh. They also joined hands with the enemy. The people of Sindh were divided among themselves and no wonder they failed to check the advance of Mohammad-bin-Qasim.

The unpopularity of Dahir also helped the Arabs. Chacha, the founder of the dynasty, was only a Minister of Sahasi. On the death of his master, he usurped the throne and married the widow queen. This was hated by the people. Chach, the Brahman ruler, ruled with an iron hand. The Jats were not allowed to carry arms, or ride on saddled horses. They were not allowed to wear silk. They were forced to walk bare-headed and bare-footed. They had to carry with them dogs to indicate their presence. Dahir was the son of Chacha and he also was hated by the people.

Sindh was a very poor country and consequently its rulers could not afford to maintain a big standing army which could meet the invaders. Moreover, the Arab forces were better equipped. Those were also superior in number. All these contributed towards Arab's success.

Sindh was isolated from the rest of India and consequently nobody took any interest in Sindh and the same was conquered by the Arabs.

The betrayal by Sindh generals and other private individuals helped the Arabs to win.

The spirit of adventure and fanaticism also helped the Arabs to win. They were inspired to fight harder as they felt that they were fighting for the cause of Islam.

Another cause of Arab success was the folly of Dahir himself. Even when he found the danger from the Arabs was real and the Arabs were very near him, he did not make preparations to advance towards them and check them. He continued to wait till the arrival of the foreigners in his own neighbourhood. He did not bother to stop Qasim till he reached Debal and besieged it. Moreover, Dahir put his trust in pitched battles. He ought to have adopted other tactics against the foreigners.

### **Why Arab Conquest an Episode ?**

Many factors were responsible for the failure of the Arabs to leave any permanent effect behind. The most important cause was the premature death of Mohammad-bin-Qasim. He was a young man at the time of his death and if his life had been spared, he might have completed his work which was otherwise incomplete. The enthusiasm of his followers was damped and the further expansion of the Arabs in India was thus halted.

Another cause was the rivalry of the two groups for the Khilafat. In 750 A.D., there was a revolution as a result of which the Umayyads were overthrown and the Abbasids came to



power. As the Umayyads had started the conquest of Sindh, the Abbasids sent their officers to Sindh with orders to turn out the Umayyad governors and officers. That must have resulted in the lowering of the prestige of the Arabs in Sindh. The governors and chiefs of the Sindh became practically independent.

The Arabs entered India from the wrong quarter. Sindh was a very poor country and it could not give the Arabs the necessary resources with which the rest of India could be conquered. As it was not very profitable, not much attention was given to Sindh.

The lack of a paramount power in India added to the difficulties of the Arabs. If the whole country had been under one ruler, the whole of India could have been conquered by defeating that one ruler. As it was, there were too many rulers in India to be conquered and that was practically an impossible task. According to Elphinstone, "even the divisions of the Hindus were in their favour, the downfall of one Raja only removed a rival from the prince who was next behind, and the invader dismissed his numbers and got further from his resources, without being able to strike a blow which might bring his undertaking to a conclusion."

The Arab conquerors settled in Sindh and married Indian women. They lost their fanaticism and ultimately failed to absorb the Hindus. In the time of Harun, the empire "lost touch with everything original and vital in Islam" and "speculative philosophy and high living" took the place of "Quranic orthodoxy and Arabian simplicity." According to Sir Mark Sykes, "The solitary bond which could have held the empire together, sternness and plainness of the Muslim faith, was completely neglected by both the Caliph and his advisers." Racial, religious and political factions broke the brotherhood of Islam. The Arabic Khalifat fell before the Turks and Karmatian and other heretics flocked to Sindh.

According to Lane-Poole "It has been supposed that the crude civilization and austere creed of the Muslims stood paralysed in face of the rich and ancient culture, the profound philosophy, and the ritual of the Hindus, but these contrasts did not check the later success of Islam in the same land. The more obvious explanation lies in the existence of the Rajput kings on the north and east, and in the inadequate force dispatched by the Caliphs for so formidable a project as the conquest of India. After the first expedition under the ill-fated Mohammad-bin-Qasim, we hear of no reinforcements, and twenty years after his death the Arabs were still so insecure on the Indus that they built a city refuge as a retreat in times of jeopardy. The province was not only imperfectly subdued but also extremely poor, and the Caliphs soon abandoned it in all but name as too unremunerative to be worth maintaining." (*Medieval India*, pp. 7-8).

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### CHAPTER III

## India on the eve of Muslim Conquest

On the eve of the Muslim invasions of India in the beginning of the 11th century, India was divided into a large number of states. There was going on a struggle for supremacy among the heads of those states. They were so jealous of one another that they could not put a united front against the foreign invaders. The lack of a sense of unity among them was responsible for their defeat.

### Multan and Sindh

The Arabs had conquered Sindh in 712 A.D. and had also established their control over Multan. These Muslim states were able to maintain their existence in spite of the fact that the Hindu states in their neighbourhood were certainly very strong and could have finished them only if they could join hands. Their mutual jealousies helped these states to continue. These states threw off the yoke of the Caliph in 871 A.D. and after that enjoyed complete independence. On account of their peculiar position in the country, they continued to profess nominal allegiance to the Caliph. There were many dynastic changes from time to time. However, at the beginning of the 11th century, Multan was being ruled by the Karmathians and the name of their ruler was Fateh Daud. He was a capable ruler. Sindh proper was being ruled by the Arabs.

### The Hindushahi Kingdom

The Hindushahi Kingdom extended from the river Chenab to the Hindukush mountains. It included Kabul. This Hindu Kingdom was able to resist the pressure of the Arabs for 200 years. Ultimately, it was forced to give up a part of Afghanistan including Kabul and shift its capital to Uddhandapur or Waihand. Jai-pala was the name of the Hindu ruler of this kingdom towards the end of the 10th century. He was a brave soldier and a capable ruler. However, he did not prove himself to be a match for the foreign invaders.

### **Kashmir**

Another important kingdom at that time was Kashmir. Its ruler came into conflict with the Hindushahi Kingdom and Kanauj. Shankarvarman was a very famous king of Kashmir. He was responsible for the extension of the boundaries of Kashmir in many directions. It is said that he died while fighting with the people of Urasa, modern Hazara district. There was a lot of confusion after his death and ultimately Yasaskara ascended the throne. The dynasty founded by him did not last long. The next important ruler was Parvagupta who himself was succeeded by Kshemagupta. Dida, his queen, was actually the ruler of the country during the reign of her husband. Ultimately, she managed to oust her husband and place the crown over her own head. She ruled up to 1003 A.D. After that Sangrama Raja founded a new dynasty known as the Lohara dynasty. It is clear that when Punjab was being attacked by the Muslims, Kashmir was being ruled by a woman.

### **Kanauj**

The Pratiharas ruled over Kanauj from about the middle of the 9th century A.D. They traced their descent from Lakshman, the brother of Ram Chandra. There are scholars who believe that they descended from the Gurjara race. Vatsa Raja won the title of Samrat or Emperor. He was succeeded by Nagabhatta II. The latter defeated Dharampala, the king of Bengal but suffered defeat at the hands of the Rashtrakutas. The Pratiharas had to continue a fight against their neighbours. Mahipala, the Pratihara king, was defeated by Indra III, the Rashtrakuta king and lost his capital, Kanauj. The Pratihara power was considerably weakened and its rulers continued to rule over the Upper Gangetic Valley and parts of Rajasthan and Malwa. Their former feudatories, the Chandelas of Bundhelkhand, the Chalukyas of Gujarat and Paramaras of Malwa became independent. The last Pratihara ruler was Rajvapala. His capital, Kanauj, was invaded by Mahmud Ghazni in 1018 A.D. The Pratiharas were succeeded by Gahadawalas of Kanauj. The founder of their dynasty was Chandra Deva. He protected the sacred cities of Kashi, Kanauj, Ayodhya and Indrasthan. Probably, he also created a standing army to guard the frontier by levying a tax known as the Urushadanda. Govinda Chandra, his grandson, continued fighting against his neighbours and was successful in extending his eastern frontier upto Monghyer. Probably, he did not succeed much against the Muslims. Govind Chandra was succeeded by Vijaya Chandra. Hostilities started again with the Muslims during his reign. He was succeeded by his son, Jaya Chandra. The latter had to fight against the Senas in the east and the Chauhans of Ajmer and Sambhar in the west. He abolished the tax called Urushadanda. There was bitter hostility between Jaichandra and Prithvi Raj Chauhan and that was partly responsible for the destruction of both.

### **The Chandelas**

To the south of Kanauj lay the kingdom of the Chandelas of Khajuraho. Vidyadhara, its ruler, fought against Mahmud of



Ghazni. After his death, the kingdom passed through many ups and downs. Madanavarman (1129-1183 A.D.) not only defended his kingdom against the foreign invaders but also extended its boundaries. Paramardin, his grandson, ruled from 1165 to 1201 A.D. He suffered defeat at the hands of Prithvi Raj Chauhan in about 1182 A.D. Paramardin lacked valour. He was hostile to the Chauhans and might have been on friendly terms with the Gahadawalas.

### The Tomars of Delhi

The Tomars of Delhi had proved more than once their right to be the defenders of the gateway to the Gangetic plains. In 1043 A.D., Mahipala Tomar captured Hansi, Thanesar, Nagarkot and many other forts. Although he advanced as far as Lahore, he failed to capture the same. In spite of this the Tomars were attacked by their Rajput neighbours. Under these circumstances, the Tomars changed their policy and entered into some sort of an alliance with the Muslims against their Rajput enemies.

### The Chauhans

The Chauhans were the rivals of the Tomars for a long time. They were able to increase their power during the 11th and 12th centuries A.D. In 1079 A.D., Durlabharaja III lost his life while fighting against the Muslims. The struggle against the Muslims was continued by his nephew, Prithviraj I. Ajayaraja, the next ruler, claimed to have defeated his Muslim enemies from Ghazna. Actually, he appears to have suffered defeat at their hands. Arnoraja, the son of Ajayaraja, was able to defeat the Muslim raiders in a battle near Ajmer. Not contented with this, he carried his raids into the territories of his enemies. During the reign of his son, Bisal or Vighraharaja IV, a Muslim attack was beaten off and the Chauhans were able to capture the forts of Hansi and Delhi. The Tomars of Delhi continued to rule after that as feudatories of the Chauhans. Vighraharaja can certainly claim credit for having realised the danger from the Muslims and his duty to fight against them. A study of the Siwalik Pillar Prasasti and the play Lalitavigharaja of which he is the hero shows Vighraharaja had decided to make the country called Aryavarta the abode of the Aryas by the extermination of the invaders from the Indian soil and the protection of the temples of the Hindus from destruction at the hands of the Muslims.

A reference may be made to the rivalry between the Chauhans and the Chaulukyas. Mulraja I, the Chaulukya ruler, was defeated by Vighraharaja II, the Chauhan ruler. Jayasimha Siddharaja of Gujarat tried to end the hostilities by giving his daughter in marriage to Arnoraja. However, hostilities once again flared up in the reign of Kumarapala Chaulukya who defeated Arnoraja near Ajmer and forced him to conclude peace on very humiliating terms. Vighraharaja IV, the Chauhan ruler, avenged the insult by ravaging the Chaulukya territories and capturing Chittor. Hostilities continued even during the succeeding reigns. When both sides got tired, a treaty of peace was concluded in about 1187 A.D. In spite of this, there was no chance of the two powers joining hands to fight against the Muslims.

The desire to be the supreme political power in central India made the Chauhans attack the Chandelas of Mandla, Kalyanpur, the Bhadras of Sripatha or Barana, the Parmaras of Malwa, Gujarat, and the Gahadavalas of Kanauj and Benares. Prithviraj III himself attacked Paramidin Chandel, but also attacked and defeated the Bhadras and perhaps also annexed some of their territory to his own dominions. The Chauhans were often on hostile terms with the Parmaras of Malwa. As the Parmaras of Avantipur and the Chauhans their over-lords, an attack on them formed a part of the Chandel-Chaulukya struggle for supremacy. As regards the Gahadavalas, tradition is unanimous in regarding Jayachandra Gahadaval and Prithviraj III as bitter enemies. This hostility was recorded on account of the abduction of Jayachandra's daughter Samvagra, by Prithviraj III.

### **The Chaulukyas of Gujarat**

The Kingdom of the Chaulukyas of Gujarat was founded by Mulraj in the middle of the 10th century. It continued to increase in power and in the reigns of Jayasimha Siddharaja and Kumarapala, it became the strongest state of Western India comprising Gujarat, Saurashtra, Malwa, Abhinadol and Konkana. Kumarapala was succeeded by Ajayaraja who himself was succeeded by Mulraj II and Bhima II. The invasion of Muhammad Ghori in the reign of Mulraj II was repelled by his mother with the help of her feudatories. Mulraj II ruled only for 12 months and during the reign of his successor Bhima II, his feudatories declared themselves independent and probably deprived him of his throne. Jayasimhasena and Virachandola of Dholkala helped him to recover some of his lost power. It is true that Bhima II was a powerful ruler but he did not remove the danger which he was facing along with others from Muhammad Ghori. So long his own territory was not attacked, he was not prepared to join hands with others to fight against the Muslims. The result was that a very valuable opportunity was lost forever.

### **The Parmaras of Malwa**

The position of the Parmaras of Malwa was such that they had to fight against most of the Northern as well as Southern powers. Bhoja, the Great, appears to have tried to regenerate Hindu society. He also fought against the Muslims. It was probably his power which prevented Mahmud of Ghazni to return by the route he had taken to reach Somnath in 1024 A.D. There is no evidence to show that the successors of Bhoja continued to follow an anti-Muslim policy. In the last quarter of the 12th century, Malwa was not of much political consequence.

### **The Kalachuris**

Two of the branches of the Kalachuris ruled at Gorakhpur. Another branch ruled at Tripuri. Kokalla, its ruler, is said to have plundered the treasury of Turushkas. Another early ruler of Dahala who fought against the Muslims, was Gangeyadeva Vikramaditya who was in possession of Banaras in 1034 A.D., when Niyaltigin plundered it. Later on, the Kalachuris were engaged in a struggle for supremacy

with the Chandellas on the one hand and the Parmaras on the other. Jayasimha Kalachuri came to the throne in about 1139 A.D. He is said to have repulsed an attack by Khusrav Malik, the Ghaznavide ruler. Between 1177 and 1180 A.D., Jayasimha was succeeded by Vijayasimha and the latter ruled at least up to 1195. Like his predecessors, he seems to have continued fighting against his neighbours.

### **Palas of Bengal**

Devapala of the Pala dynasty ruled for a long period but as his successors were weak, his kingdom declined. The degenerate Palas had to fight against the Pratiharas of Kanauj and thereby brought sufferings for their people. Mahipala I ruled over Bengal in the first quarter of the 11th century and he was a contemporary of Mahmud of Ghazni. He was able to restore, at least partially, the fortunes of his family. However, a part of Bengal had already fallen into the hands of his vassals who nominally recognised him as their overlord. While Mahmud of Ghazni was attacking India, Bengal was threatened by Rajendra Chola and thus she suffered a lot.

### **The Deccan Kingdoms**

As in the north, a struggle for supremacy was being carried on in Southern India by the Chaulukyas of Kalyani, the Cholas of Kanchi and the Pandyas of Madura. The early Chaulukyas in the Deccan had fallen in the struggle for supremacy in 753 A.D. at the hands of the Rashtrakutas and the latter had given place to the later Chaulukyas in 973 A.D. Likewise, the great Pallava dynasty had fallen towards the end of the 9th century. The founder of the later Chaulukya dynasty was Taila II who claimed descent from the early Chaulukyas of Vatapi. He made Kalyani his capital. His successors had to fight constantly against the Cholas who rose to prominence under Rajaraja, the Great, who ruled from 985 to 1014 A.D. He was succeeded by Rajendra Chola who ruled up to 1044. Rajendra Chola was a great warrior and conqueror. He made extensive conquests in Southern and Northern India and was considered to be one of the greatest rulers of the country. While the Cholas and the Chaulukyas were involved in a bitter struggle in the south, India was attacked by the Muslims.

### **Social and Religious Condition**

The social and religious condition of India was not happy at this time. As there had been no invasion of this country for a few centuries, people were suffering from a false sense of security. The result was that no provision was made for the defence of the country from foreign dangers. The material prosperity of the country also weakened the people. Armies were neglected and no forts were constructed for defence. There was no sense of patriotism among the people. They were thoroughly narrowminded and selfish. They were haughty and proud without any purpose. Their false sense of pride was going to give them trouble. Alberuni points out that "The Hindus believed that there is no country like theirs, no nation

like theirs, no king like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs.' Such an attitude is never good for the progress of a nation.

The people of India were living in isolation from the rest of the world. They were so much concerned with themselves that they did not bother about what was happening outside their frontiers. Their ignorance of the developments outside their country put them in a very weak position. It also created a sense of stagnation among them. There was decay on all sides. There was not much life in the literature of the period. Architecture, painting and fine arts were also adversely affected. Indian society had become static and caste system had become very rigid. There was no remittance of widows and restrictions with regard to food and drink became very rigid. The untouchables were forced to live outside the towns.

Hard life was disappearing from the people and they were wasting their time in luxuries. Vammarg Diaram became popular during this period. Its followers believed in the motto of eat, drink and be merry. They indulged in wine, flesh, fish and women. Vices were penetrating even the educational institutions. It is stated that in the University of Vikramasila in Bihar, a student priest was found with a bottle of wine. When he was interrogated by the University authorities, he stated that the bottle had been given to him by a nun. When the authorities decided to take action against him, the members of the University were divided into two groups, one in favour of taking action and the other opposed it. When such a thing could happen in an educational institution, the condition of other people can well be imagined.

It is rightly pointed out that the Mathas which were formerly the seats of learning, had now become centres of luxury and idleness. Most of the monks lived a life of license. Devadasi system prevailed in the temples. A large number of unmarried girls were dedicated to the service of the deity in big temples. That led to corruption and prostitution in temples. Tantrik literature developed during this period. It was obscene in the extreme. It must have created a very adverse effect on the morals of the people. Even great scholars did not hesitate to write obscene books. A minister of one of the kings in Kashmir wrote a book named Kuttini Matam or "Opinions of a go-between." Kshemendra, another great Sanskrit scholar, wrote a book called Samaya Matraka or "The Biography of a Prostitute." In this book, "the heroine describes her adventures in every sphere of society as a courtesan, as the mistress of a noble, as a street walker, as a go-between, as a false nun, as a corrupter of the youth and a frequenter of religious places."

The majority of the Hindus believed in 8 classes of spiritual beings viz., the Devas or angels, D<sup>r</sup>itya Danava, Gandharva and Apsaras, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Kinnaras, Nagas and Vidyadharas. The beliefs of the educated and uneducated people were different. The former believed in abstract ideas and the general principles while the latter were contented with derived rules, without caring for details. Uneducated people worshipped images. "This is the cause which leads to the manufacture of idols, monuments in honour of certain much venerated persons, priests, sages, angels, destined to keep alive



their memory when they are absent or dead, to create for them a lasting place of grateful veneration in the hearts of men when they die."

The educated people called God by the name of Ishwar who was self-sufficing beneficent and who gave without receiving. They considered the unity of God as absolute. The existence of God they considered as a real existence because everything that existed, existed through Him.

The Hindu belief in metempsychosis was deep-rooted. "It is a trifle for them to burn alive in fire." They believed that the souls of men used to meet there (at Somnath) after separation from the body and that the idol used to incorporate them at its pleasure in other bodies, in accordance with their doctrine of transmigration."

The chanting of the Vedic Mantras and the performance of religious rituals was the monopoly of the Brahmanas. The Muslims were surprised by this phenomenon as they were not accustomed to such privileges in religious matters. According to Alberuni, "There is very little disputing about theological topics among themselves; at the most, they fight with words, but they will never stake their soul or body or their property in religious controversy."

Pilgrimages formed a part of Hindu religious beliefs. They were not obligatory but facultative and meritorious. In every place to which some holiness was ascribed the Hindus constructed ponds intended for ablutions. In this, they had attained a high degree of art.

Sati was prevalent in those days. "When a Raja dies, all wives burn themselves on his pyre." The view of Alberuni is that Sati was performed only by the Vaishyas and Sudras, especially at those times which were prized as the most suitable for a man to acquire in them, for a future repetition of life, a better form and condition than that in which he happens to have been born and live. Burning oneself was forbidden to Brahmanas and Kshatriyas by a special law. If they wanted to kill themselves, they did so at the time of an eclipse or they hired somebody to drown them in the Ganges, keeping them under water till they were dead.

"The disposal of the dead was in one of the three ways: by fire, or by floating the body into a stream, by being cast away to feed wild animals. The Brahmanas wailed aloud for their dead but not so the Buddhists." "Regarding the return of the immortal soul (to God), the Hindus think that partly it is effected by the rays of the Sun, the soul attaching itself to them, partly by the flame of the fire which raises it (to God)."

The idea of reward or punishment for the soul, also prevailed among the Hindus. They believed that there were three worlds where the soul staved. "The Hindus called the world Lok. Its division consists of the upper, lower and the middle. The upper one is called Svargloka, i.e., Paradise, the lower Narakloka, i.e., the world of the serpents, the middle world, that one in which we live is called Madhyaloka, and Manushyaloka i.e., the world of men. In the Madhyaloka, man has to earn, in the upper to receive his reward, in

the lower to receive punishment...but in either of them there is the soul, the soul free from the body."

India was Brahmanic and not Buddhist. In the first half of the 11th century, all traces of Buddhism in Central Asia, Khurasan, Afghanistan and north-western India has disappeared. A man like Alberuni knew nothing about Buddhism. India as known to Alberuni and other contemporary Muslim writers was in matters of religion Vaishnava and not Saivite. Vishnu or Narayan was the first God while Siva was only incidentally mentioned and that also not in a favourable manner.

### Economic Condition

As India was not attacked for a few centuries, there was a lot of wealth in the country. Both mineral and agricultural wealth continued to accumulate. Temples were rich and individuals were also rich. No wonder, both of them were the targets of attacks by the Muslims. The people lived in luxury. Merchants were millionaires, and they gave thousands of rupees in charity. There was great disparity of wealth. The rich were very rich and the poor were very poor. Most of the people lived in villages and they were rather poor. They had very few belongings. The people had thrifty habits. They saved whatever they could and hence managed to have a good bit of wealth.

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## CHAPTER IV

# Rise and Fall of the Ghaznavides

It is true that the Arabs were the first Muslim conquerors to invade India but their invasion was merely an episode in the history of India. However, the work started by the Arabs was completed by the Turks. In the eighth and ninth centuries, the Turks got the upper hand over the Khalifas of Baghdad. The Turks were different from the Arabs. They were more aggressive than the Arabs and they spread Islam at the point of the sword. They were brave and full of boundless energy. They were thoroughly materialistic in their outlook. They were full of ambition. They were eminently fitted for establishing a military empire in the East. Dr. Lane-Poole describes the expansion of the Turks as "the master movement in the Mohammadan Empire in the tenth and eleventh centuries."

### Alaptgin

The first Turkish adventurer whose name is associated with the story of Muslim conquest of India was Alaptgin. He was a man of great ability and courage. He was originally a slave of Abdul Malik, the Samanid king of Bukhara. By dint of sheer ability, he rose to the rank of Hajib-ul-Hujjab. He was appointed the Governor of Khorasan in 956 A.D. When Abdul Malik died in 962 A.D., there was a struggle for succession to throne between his brother and uncle. Alaptgin took up the cause of the uncle but in spite of that, Mansur, the brother of Abdul Malik, gained throne. It was under these circumstances that Alaptgin settled in Ghazni in Afghan territory with his personal retainers who numbered about 800. He frustrated the plots of Mansur to dislodge him from Ghazni and retained the mastery of the city and its neighbourhood. Alaptgin died after a successful reign of eight years.

### Subuktgin (977-97)

After the death of Alaptgin, there was once again struggle for power and it was in 977 A.D. that Subuktgin became the king of Ghazni. Subuktgin was also originally a slave. He had been purchased by Alaptgin from a certain merchant who had brought him from Turkestan to Bukhara. As Subuktgin appeared to be a promising youngman, he was given promotions by his master. He was given the title of Amir-ul-Umra. Alaptgin also married his daughter to him.

After settling himself on the throne, he started a career of conquest which brought him into prominence in the eastern world. He conquered Lamghan and Sistan. After years of continuous fighting, he was able to secure the province of Khorasan in 984 A.D. Ambitious as he was, Subuktgin directed his attention towards the conquest of India, a country full of riches and the worshippers of idols. The first Indian ruler he had to meet was Raja Jai Pal of the Shahi dynasty whose kingdom extended from Sirhind to Lamghan (Jalalabad) and from Kashmir to Multan. Shahi kings had their capitals successively at Undi, Lahore and Bhatinda. In 986-87 A.D., Subuktgin attacked the Indian territory for the first time. He conquered forts and captured cities "which had up to that time been tenanted only by infidels and not trodden by the camels and horses of Musalmans." This was too much for Jai Pal. He collected his troops and marched into the valley of Lamghan where he was met by Subuktgin and his son. The battle dragged on for several days. A snow-storm upset all the calculations of Jai Pal. It was under these circumstances that he sued for peace. Subuktgin was willing to accept the terms of peace but Mahmud, his son, asked him to continue the war for "the honour of Islam and of Musalmans." He addressed his father in these words: "Cry not for peace nor demand it, for you are the highest and God is with you, and will not suffer your affairs to fail." In spite of his initial failure, Jai Pal sent the following message to Subuktgin: "You have seen the impetuosity of the Hindus and their indifference to death whenever any calamity befalls them, as at this moment. If, therefore, you refuse to grant peace in the hope of obtaining plunder, tribute, elephants, and prisoners, then there is no alternative for us but to mount the horse of stern determination, destroy our property, take out the eyes of our elephants, cast our children into the fire, and rush on each other with sword and spear, so that all that will be left to you, is stones and dirt, dead bodies, and scattered bones." After this, peace was made and Jai Pal agreed to pay a tribute of one million Dirhams, fifty elephants and some cities and fortresses situated in his dominion. He was also to send two hostages to Subuktgin as a guarantee for fulfilling the terms of the treaty.

It is stated that as soon as Jai Pal found himself out of danger, he decided to violate the terms of peace and imprisoned the officers of Subuktgin who had accompanied him. Subuktgin was very much annoyed and he appeared like a "foaming torrent". He at once marched towards India to punish Jai Pal for his "wickedness and infidelity." The border lands of Jai Pal were ravaged and the town of Lamghan was captured. When Jai Pal found that "his chiefs had become the food of vultures and hvenas, and that weakness had fallen on his arm, he resolved to fight once more against the Muslims." He organised in 991 A.D., a confederacy of the rulers of Ajmer, Kalinjar and Kanauj and started at the head of more than a lakh of soldiers to meet the enemy. There was bitter fighting and ultimately the Hindus "turned their tails towards their heads like frightened dogs, and the Raja was contented to offer the best things in his most distant provinces to the conqueror on condition that the hair on the crowns of



their heads should not be shaven off." Subuktgin got a lot of booty including 200 elephants of war. Jai Pal paid a heavy tribute. The sovereignty of Subuktgin was acknowledged by Jai Pal. Subuktgin appointed one of his officers with ten thousand horses to the government of Peshawar.

In 997 A.D., Subuktgin died, leaving behind him a large and well-established kingdom for his son, Mahmud. There is no doubt that Subuktgin was a brave and virtuous ruler. He ruled his territory for about 20 years with prudence, equity and moderation.

### **Mahmud Ghazni (997-1030 A.D.)**

Mahmud, son of Subuktgin, was born in 971 A.D. His mother was the daughter of a noble of Zabulistan, a district round Ghazni. It is for this reason that Mahmud is sometimes called Mahmud Zabuli. Very little is known about the early career of Mahmud but all contemporaries tell us that Subuktgin took a lot of interest in giving all kinds of training to Mahmud. He was not only given training in the arts of warfare and administration, but was also made an expert in the science of statecraft. He was given a responsible position in the battle of Lamghan. The whole of Khorasan was put under his charge. Thus, he was eminently fitted to be a successor to his father.

The relations between Subuktgin and Mahmud were not cordial at the time of the death of Subuktgin and consequently the latter nominated his younger son **Ismail** his successor. The result was that Ismail was put on the throne by the nobles. Mahmud was not prepared to tolerate this. He asked his brother, Ismail, to divide the kingdom and keep Balkh for himself and give Ghazni to him. The suggestion was not accepted by Ismail and consequently Mahmud marched against him, defeated and imprisoned him. After that, he asked the Samanid ruler of Bokhara to confirm him in the dominion of Balkh and Ghazni. Khalifa Al-Qadir-Billah gave Mahmud a robe of honour and also conferred on him the title of Yamin-ud-Daulah (the right hand of the Empire) and Amin-ul-Millat (Custodian of the Faith).

It is stated that when the Khalifa appointed Mahmud as his Lieutenant, he asked him to lead every year an expedition against India and no wonder Mahmud led a very large number of expeditions against India. According to Sir Henry Elliot, Mahmud led as many as seventeen expeditions. However, some historians give the number as 12. It appears that the number 17 is more correct.

### **Expeditions**

(1) The first expedition of Mahmud was directed against the frontier towns in 1000 A.D. Many fortresses and districts were captured. After that Mahmud returned to Ghazni. According to Sir Wolsely Haig this expedition was "anoerphal" or doubtful. This expedition does not seem to have been noticed by the contemporary writers.

(2) Mahmud led his second expedition against India in the

same year at the head of 10,000 horsemen for the purpose of "exalting the standard of religion, of widening the plain of right, of illuminating the words of truth and of strengthening the power of justice." Jai Pal also collected all the available troops. A bloody battle was fought at Peshawar in which the Hindus were defeated. 15,000 Hindus were killed. They were spread like a carpet over the ground and they provided the food of beasts and birds of prey. Jai Pal was captured with his sons, grandsons and a number of important relatives and officers. According to Utbi, they "being strongly bound with ropes, were carried before the Sultan, like as evil-deers, on whose faces the fumes of infidelity are evident . . . and will be bound and carried to Hell. Some had their arms forcibly tied behind their backs, some were seized by the cheek, some were driven by blows on the neck." A treaty was made by which Jai Pal agreed to pay two and a half lacs of Dinars as ransom. He also agreed to give 50 elephants. His sons and grandsons were taken as hostages for fulfilling the conditions of peace. Mahmud followed his victory by advancing to Waihand which was the capital of Jai Pal. He returned to Ghazni with the laurels of victory and with a lot of booty. As regards Jai Pal, he did not survive the shock of humiliation and he burnt himself to death. He was succeeded by his son Anandpal in 1002 A.D.

(3) The third expedition of Mahmud was against the Raja of Bhira who in spite of his promises, had failed to help Mahmud. It is true that the Raja put up a stiff resistance but ultimately he ran away from the battle-field. He was pursued and ultimately he stabbed himself to death. A large number of Hindus were massacred and only those were spared who became converts to Islam.

(4) The fourth invasion of Mahmud was against Abdul-Fatah Daud, the ruler of Multan, in 1006 A.D. Daud belonged to the sect of Qarmatian heretics. The latter did not conform to orthodox Islam. In 930 A.D., they had invaded Mecca and carried away the Black Stone and other sacred relics. They had contempt for the ritual of Islam. They had no objection to taking forbidden meat. No wonder, in the eyes of Mahmud, Daud was as bad a Kafir as a Rajput. Mahmud started from Ghazni in 1006 A.D. to conquer Multan. As his route was through the Punjab, Anandpal, its ruler, offered resistance but he was over-powered. Mahmud pursued him to Kashmir and drove him away. After that, Mahmud advanced upon Multan and captured it by assault after fighting for seven days. He "levied upon the people twenty thousand dirhams with which to respite their sins." Mahmud put Sukhpal alias Nawasa Shah (grandson of Jai Pal) in charge of the Punjab and Multan and retired to Ghazni.

(5) After some time, Mahmud was told that Sukhpal alias Nawasa Shah had declared himself independent and also given up Islam. In order to punish Sukhpal, Mahmud invaded India once again, defeated Nawasa Shah and took over the administration in his own hands. Sukhpal alias Nawasa Shah was defeated, arrested and imprisoned.

(6) The sixth expedition of Mahmud was directed against Anandpal in 1008 A.D. According to Firishta, Anandpal had orga-

nised a confederacy of rulers of Ujjain, Gwalior, Kalinjar, Kanauj, Delhi and Ajmer. The truth of this statement of Firishta is doubted but it is admitted that Anandpal invited his fellow princes to attend the confederacy which aimed at fighting against Mahmud. The huge army was collected by Anandpal to fight against the Turks. We are told that so great was the enthusiasm among the people that well-to-do Hindu ladies sold their jewellery and melted down their golden ornaments to help their husbands. The poor contributed whatever little they earned by manual labour. The Khokhars from Multan area also joined the Hindus against Mahmud. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "The forces of race, religion and patriotism were arrayed against him for the preservation of Hindu culture and civilization, the Hindu hearth and the home from the barbarian inroad." According to Prof. Habib, "A patriotic breeze swept over the towns and hamlets of Hindustan calling its men to arms. Hindu women sold their jewels and sent the money from distant parts to be used against the Mussalmans. Their poorer sisters, who had no jewels to sell, worked feverishly at the spinning wheel or as hired labourers to be able to send something to the men of the army. All that excites nation to heroic deeds was there, the preservation of an ancient and everlasting civilisation, the sacred temple and no less sacred hearth. Yet the patriotic spirit of the people was paralysed by suspicions created by years of civil war; the Rais were doubtful of others' intentions and their followers shared their doubts. Anandpal was important enough to take precedence but not strong enough to issue orders and the Indian army was directed by no single commander in the field of battle." There was a closely contested battle, 30 000 Khokhars bare-footed and bare-headed with daggers and spears in their hands, plunged themselves into the battle and killed three or four thousand Muslims. Mahmud was so much disappointed that he decided to sue for peace. Unfortunately the elephant on which Anandpal was seated, got frightened and ran away from the battle-field. Utter confusion prevailed among the Hindus and they ran away from the battle-field. A large number of Hindus were captured and put to death. A huge booty fell in the hands of Muslims.

(7) In 1009 A.D., Mahmud led the next expedition against Nagarkot in Kangra Hills. The fort of Nagarkot stood on the top of a hill and the Hindus had deposited a lot of money in that fort. The fort was besieged by the Muslims. When the Hindus saw them coming like a swarm of locusts, they opened the gates of the fort out of fear and "fell on the earth like sparrows before a hawk or rain before lightning." According to Firishta, Mahmud carried away seven laes of gold Dinars, 700 maunds of gold and silver plates, 200 maunds of pure gold in ingots, 2 000 maunds of unwrought silver and 20 maunds of jewels, pearls diamonds, rubies and other precious stones. According to Utbi, "The treasures were laden on the backs of as many camels as they could procure, and the officers carried away the rest. The stamped coin amounted to seventy thousand royal Dirhams, and the gold and silver ingots amounted to seven hundred thousand, four hundred maunds in weight, besides wearing apparel and fine clothes of Sus, respecting which, old men said they never remembered to have seen



any so fine, soft and embroidered. Among the booty was a house of white silver, like the houses of rich men, the length of which was thirty yards and the breadth fifteen yards. It could be broken to pieces and put together again. And there was a canopy made of the fine linen of Rum, forty yards long and twenty yards broad, supported on two golden and two silver poles which had been cast in moulds."

It is stated that Mahmud came back to Ghazni where he displayed the "jewel and unboiled pearls and rubies shining like sparks, or like wine congealed with ice, and emeralds like fresh springs of mystle and diamonds in size and weight like pomegranates." According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "The acquisition of vast treasures whetted the rapacity of these adventurers and they repeated their raids with astonishing frequency."

(8) In 1010 A.D., Mahmud marched towards Multan and defeated and punished the rebellious chief, **Daud**.

(9) In spite of defeat, Anandpal did not lose heart. He was determined to resist the enemy to the bitter end. He shifted his capital to Nandanah and gathered a small army and consolidated his position in the Salt Range region. He was succeeded by his son Trilochanpal. In 1014 A.D., Mahmud captured Nandanah after a brief siege. Trilochanpal took shelter in Kashmir but Mahmud pursued him and defeated the combined armies of Trilochanpal and the Commander of the Kashmir ruler. Mahmud did not consider it safe to penetrate into Kashmir. Trilochanpal also came back to the Punjab and established himself in the Sivalik Hills. Trilochanpal entered into an alliance with Vidyadhar, the ruler of Bundelkhand who was a very powerful prince in northern India at that time. In order to break the alliance, Mahmud came to India and defeated Trilochanpal in a battle near the Ram Ganga. In 1021-1022 A.D., Trilochanpal was killed and he was succeeded by Bhimpal, his son. He also died in 1026 A.D. and with him came to an end the Hindu Shahi dynasty which had done a lot to check the advance of the Muslims in India.

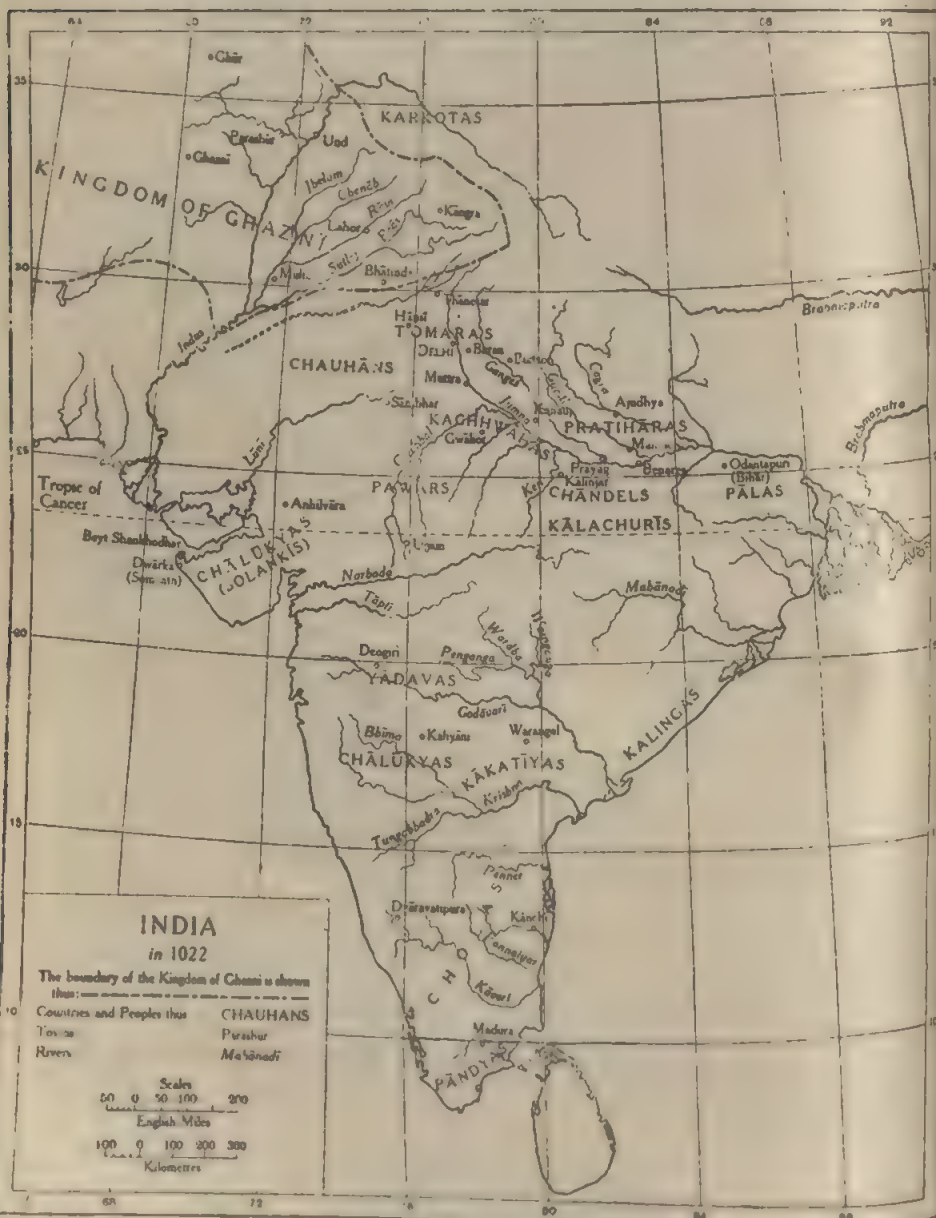
(10) In 1014 A.D., Mahmud led an expedition against Thanesar. The Hindus fought desperately but were defeated. The fort of Thanesar with a large booty, fell into the hands of Mahmud. The city was plundered. The image of Chakra Swami Temple was sent to Ghazni where it was thrown in the public square.

(11) Between 1015 and 1021 A.D., Mahmud made two unsuccessful attempts to conquer Kashmir but on both the occasions he was unsuccessful. Ultimately he gave up the idea of conquering Kashmir.

(12) The next expedition was directed against Kanauj which was famous as the imperial capital of Hindustan. Mahmud started in 1018 A.D. from Ghazni. He captured all the forts on the way. He reached Baran or Bulandshahr. Haradatta, its ruler, surrendered and became a convert to Islam along with 10,000 men. After that, Mahmud marched against Kulachand, the ruler of Mahawan, which



is now the headquarters of a Tahsil in Mathura district. The Hindus put up a gallant fight but were defeated. About 50,000 men were



killed and drowned in the river Jamuna. Kulachand killed his wife and also himself. A huge booty including 185 elephants fell into the hands of Mahmud.

(13) Mahmud marched against Mathura which was the sacred city of the Hindus. It was a city of temples, solidly built and of exquisite designs. Regarding Mathura, Utbi says, "He (Mahmud) saw a city of wonderful fabric and conception, so that one might say this is a building of paradise, but its accidents or qualities could only come by the aid of the infernals, an intelligent man would hardly receive favourably the account of it... Around it and its sides they had placed one thousand castles built of stone which they had made idol temples, and had (cemented) fastened them well. And in the midst of the city they built a temple higher than all to delineate the beauty and decoration of which the pens of all writers and the pencils of all painters would be powerless, and would not be able to attain to the power of fixing their minds upon it and considering it." It is also stated that "if anyone should undertake to build a fabric like that, he would expend thereon one lac bags of thousand Dinars and would not complete it in two hundred years, with the assistance of the most ingenious architects." Utbi tells us that the temples contained idols of pure gold. Five of the six idols, were of the size of five cubits in the air. On one of the idols, there was a jacinth "such a one that if the Sultan had seen it exposed in the Bazar, he would have considered as under-priced at fifty thousand Dinars and would have bought it with great eagerness." On another idol, there was a sapphire, "of one solid piece, of azure water of the value of 400 Mishals." From the two feet of a third idol alone, they got four lacs of Mishals of gold. The idols of silver "were a hundred times more, so that it occupied those who estimated their standard weight a long time in weighing them." Mahmud devastated the entire city of Mathura and plundered it from one corner to the other.

(14) The same was the fate of Brindaban which had a number of forts. Its ruler ran away on the approach of the invading army. Mahmud plundered the forts and temples and got a huge booty.

Mahmud appeared before the gates of Kanauj in January 1019 A.D. We are told that Kanauj had seven forts and ten thousand temples. Rajyapala, the Pratihara ruler of Kanauj, submitted without any fighting. All the 7 forts were captured in one day. All the 10,000 temples were destroyed. The inhabitants were slain and their wealth was plundered.

On his way back, Mahmud captured the forts of Munj, Asni and Sharwa. The booty carried by Mahmud to Ghazni was 30 lacs of Dirhams, 55,000 slaves and 250 elephants.

(15) The cowardly act of submission by Rajyapala of Kanauj was resented by other Rajput rulers, particularly Gonda, the Chandela ruler of Kalinjar. Gonda entered into an alliance with the ruler of Gwalior and attacked and killed Rajyapala. When Mahmud got the information about the murder of his vassal, he decided to punish the Chandela Prince. He left Ghazni in the autumn of 1019 and advanced into the Chandela country in the teeth of opposition. According to Firishta, the army of Gonda consisting of 36,000 horses 45,000 foot and 640 elephants was ready to give battle to Mahmud. When Mahmud saw the huge army against him,

he was sorry for his hasty decision and prayed to God before his followers to give him victory. Unfortunately, Gonda also gave up all hopes of success and ran away from the battlefield. The result was that Mahmud won an unexpected victory and also got a huge booty.

(16) In 1021-22 A.D., Mahmud laid siege to Gwalior and forced its ruler to submit. After that, Mahmud proceeded towards Kalinjar, the famous fortress of Gonda. As Gonda felt that Mahmud was very strong, he made peace with him. After getting a lot of booty, Mahmud went back to Ghazni.

(17) The most important of all the expeditions of Mahmud was against Somnath. Mahmud started from Ghazni in October 1024 A.D. He made elaborate preparations for passing through the desert of Rajputana. Every trooper was required to carry with him food, water and fodder for seven days. 30,000 camels were employed to carry provisions. When Mahmud arrived at Anhilwara in January, 1025 A.D., its ruler, Raja Bhima Deo, ran away from the capital with all his followers. Those who remained behind were defeated and plundered. After that, Mahmud made his way to Somnath.

Al Qazwini (1203-83) describes the temple of Somnath in these words: "Among the wonder of that place, was the temple in which was placed the idol called Somnath. This idol was in the middle of the temple without anything to support it from below, or to suspend it from above. It was held in the highest honour among the Hindus, and whoever beheld it floating in the air was struck with amazement, whether he was a Mussalman or an infidel. The Hindus used to go on pilgrimage to it, whenever there was an eclipse of the moon, and would then assemble there to the number of more than a hundred thousands. They believed that the souls of men used to meet there after separation from the body, and that the idol used to incorporate them at its pleasure in other bodies, in accordance with the doctrine of transmigration. The ebb and flow of the tide was considered to be the worship paid to the idol by the sea. Everything of the most precious was brought there as offering, and the temple was endowed with more than 10 000 villages. There is a river (the Ganges) which is called sacred, between which and Somnath the distance is 200 **parasangas**. They used to bring the water of this river to Somnath every day and wash the temple with it. A thousand Brahmins were employed in worshipping the idol and attending on the visitors, and 500 damsels sang and danced at the door; all these were maintained upon the endowments of the temple. The edifice was built upon fifty-six pillars of teak, covered with lead. The shrine of the idol was dark, but was lighted by jewelled chandeliers of great value. Near it was chain of gold weighing 200 maunds. When a portion of the night closed, this chain used to be shaken like bells to rouse a fresh lot of Brahmins to perform worships."

Ibn-al Athir tells us that when the army of Mahmud reached Somnath, it found that the people of Somnath were amusing them-

selves on the walls of the fort at the expense of the Muslims telling them that their deity would cut off their heads and destroy them all. Next day when the Muslims advanced for assault, the Hindus left their posts on the walls. The Muslims planted their ladders against the walls and gained the summit. They proclaimed their success with the cries of Allah-u-Akbar. Then followed a fearful slaughter. A body of Hindus hurried to Somnath, cast themselves before the deity and besought him to grant them victory. Night came on and the fight was suspended. Next morning early the Muhammadans renewed the battle and made greater havoc among the Hindus, till they drove them from the town to the house of their idol Somnath. A dreadful slaughter followed at the gate of the temple. Band after band of defenders entered the temple and with their hands clasped round their necks, wept and passionately entreated Somnath. Then again they issued forth to fight until they were slain, and but few were left alive. These took to the sea in boats to make their escape but the Muslims overtook them, and some were killed and some were drowned."

It is stated that when after the fall of Somnath, Mahmud wanted to break the idol, the Brahmans requested him not to do so and take whatever he pleased. However, the reply of Mahmud was that he did not want to be known as 'idol seller, but would prefer to be known as "Mahmud, the breaker of idols". This story is related by Firishta, but rejected by Professor Habib and Dr. Nazim who have done a lot of research on the subject in modern times. The idol was broken by Mahmud and its pieces were sent to Ghazni. The treasures of the temple were looted and huge booty of diamonds, rubies and pearls fell into his hands.

After Somnath, the ruler of Anhilwara was attacked on account of his taking part in defence of Somnath. He took refuge in the fort of Khandah, which was encircled by the sea. Mahmud forded the sea at low tide. On hearing of the approach of Mahmud, the Raja ran away and the country was subjugated. The invaders entered the town, killed the males and captured women who were made slaves. It is stated that Mahmud was so much impressed by the climate of Gujarat and the wealth and beauty of its people that he decided to transfer his court from Ghazni to Anhilwara. However, he gave up the idea on account of opposition from his followers. After entrusting Gujarat to Bhim Deo, Mahmud prepared for his homeward journey. He retired to Ghazni via Sindh.

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "The victory of Somnath added fresh laurels to Mahmud's brow. To him and his followers it was triumph of the cause to which they were so intensely devoted. The Khalifa who rejoiced in the success of Muslim arms in an infidel land, sent letters and robes of honour for him and his sons. The Muslim world rang with the praises of Mahmud and he appeared to many as a great hero who had appeared upon the earth to extirpate infidelity and establish the true faith. This accounts for the legends and stories which have clustered round his name."



The last expedition of Mahmud was directed against the Jats of the Salt Range. When Mahmud was coming back from Somnath, the Jats molested his army on the way. The object of this expedition was to punish the Jats. Mahmud ordered the construction of 1,400 boats, each of which was furnished with arms and guarded by 20 archers with bows and arrows, grenades and naphtha. The Jats also had a flotilla of 8,000 boats but in spite of that they were defeated. Many of them were killed. Mahmud died in 1030 A.D.

### **Mahmud's Character**

Mahmud was a man of medium height but of strong built. He did not look like a king. His personality did not impress. However, he was a very ambitious person. He was a great general and a great soldier. He was extremely intelligent and shrewd. He possessed cool courage, prudence and resourcefulness. He was an expert in statecraft.

Professor Habib tells us that the outlook of Mahmud on life was essentially secular and he did not follow the Ulema blindly. He was not a fanatic at all. However, it is pointed out that this view is not correct. Utbi, his court historian, looked upon the expeditions of Mahmud to India as Jihad or holy war for the destruction of Hindus and spread of Islam. Utbi tells us that Mahmud at first designed in his heart to go to Sijistan, but subsequently preferred engaging previously in a holy war against Hind. The same writer tells us that Mahmud called a council "in order to secure a blessing on his designs of exalting the standard of religion of widening the plain of right, of illuminating the words of truth, and of strengthening the power of justice." It is clear from above that in the minds of Mahmud's contemporaries the object of his expeditions was to serve Islam. However, it cannot be denied that Mahmud had his greed for wealth and that also brought him to India. His thirst for winning military glory was also partly responsible for his so many invasions of India.

According to Professor Brown, "As regards Mahmud's character, we naturally find in the verses of his court poets (save such as were disappointed of their hopes like Firdausi) and in the works of state historians nothing but the most exaggerated praise, but Ibnu'l-Athir (under the year H 421 A.D. 1030) in his obituary notice of this monarch says, after praising him for his intelligence, devoutness, virtue, patronage of learned men, and strenuousness in waging war on the unbelievers that his one fault was love of money and a certain lack of scruple in his methods of obtaining it. "There was in him," he says, "nothing which could be blamed save that he would seek to obtain money in every way." Thus to give one instance, being informed of a certain man from Nishapur that he was of great opulence and copious wealth, he summoned him to Ghazna and said to him. 'I have heard that you are a Carmathian heretic'. 'I am no Carmathian', replied the unfortunate man; 'But I have wealth wherefrom what is desired (by your Majesty) may be taken, so that I be cleared of this name.' So the Sultan took from him some portion of his wealth, and provided

him with a document testifying to the soundness of his religious views. In the eyes of most Muslims, so great a champion of the faith, one who was such as courage to idolaters and so conspicuous an iconoclast, is raised above all criticism but there is no doubt that Ibnul-Athir has laid his finger on a weak spot in the Sultan's character and that, besides being greedy of wealth (which, no doubt, largely explains the persistence with which he prosecuted his Indian campaign), he was fanatical, cruel to Muslim heretics as well as to Hindoos (of whom he slew an incalculable number), fickle and uncertain in temper, and more notable as an irresistible conqueror than as a faithful friend or magnanimous foe."

### Estimate of Mahmud

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad. "To the Musalmans of his day he was a Ghazi, a champion of the faith, who tried to extirpate infidelity in heathen lands. To the Hindus, he is to this day an inhuman tyrant, a veritable Hun, who destroyed their religious susceptibilities. But the unbiased enquirer who keeps in mind the peculiar circumstances of the age must record a different verdict. In his estimate, Mahmud was a great leader of men, a just and upright ruler according to his own lights, an intrepid and gifted soldier, a dispenser of justice, a patron of letters and deserves to be ranked among the greatest kings of the world." (Medieval India, p. 105)

According to Dr. Stanley Lane-Poole "A great soldier, a man of infinite courage and indefatigable energy of mind and body. Mahmud was no constructive or far-seeing statesman. We hear of no laws or institutions or methods of government that sprung from his initiative. Outward order and security was all he attempted to attain in his unwieldy empire, to organise and consolidate was not in his scheme. He left his dominions so ill-knotted together that they began to fall asunder as soon as he was no longer alive to guard them by his vigilant activity. But so long as he lived he strove to govern every part with even justice. The most sagacious and high minded Asiatic statesman of the Middle Ages, the famous Seljuk vezir Nizam-al-Mulk, in his treatise on the art of government, cites many anecdotes of Mahmud's conscientious exercise of justice and the pains he took to protect his widely scattered subjects. 'Mahmud,' wrote the great vezir, 'was a just sovereign, a lover of learning, a man of generous nature and of pure faith.'"

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "Mahmud is one of the most prominent figures in the history of Islam. During the reign of thirty-two years, he extended his empire over the whole of the country now known as Afghanistan, the greater part of Persia and Transoxiana and the Punjab. He is stated to have made a vow to wage every year a holy war against the misbelievers of India, and he invaded the country no fewer than 17 times, extinguishing ruling house of the Punjab, crossed the Ganges, penetrated into Bundelkhand and reached the western sea."

According to Havell, the Musalmans of Mahmud's time were justified in declaring that Mahmud was endowed with all the qualities of a Prince and reflected lustre upon the faith. Mahmud was a brilliant commander in the field. As a dashing cavalry leader, he had no equal. He exploited the culture of India and Persia as systematically and zealously as he plundered the temples of the Hindus. He had no constructive genius as a statesman nor any profound religious convictions. He would have sacked Bagdad with as little compunction as he plundered Somnath if the undertaking seemed profitable and easy. He did not hesitate to threaten the Khalifa with death when the latter refused to give him Samarkand. Havell refers to the cheating of Firdousi by Mahmud and his exactions from his subjects. Havell also refers to the fact that Mahmud took away from India not only its gold and the precious stones but also Indian craftsmen so that the latter could be employed for purpose of constructing great buildings in Ghazni.

According to Professor S. R. Sharma, Mahmud was a seasoned soldier. Fear did not find any place in his heart. His army won against the rulers of India "like a comb through a poll of hair." "Forts and cities surrendered as the great Sultan passed by; abject chiefs placed their followers at his disposal. He fought when necessary but more often triumphed by mere prestige." Mahmud was an angel to his Muslim subjects at Ghazni and the devil incarnate to infidels abroad. Whatever his greatness at home, he was merely a gifted condottiere so far as the people of India were concerned.

According to Elphinstone. "Even his Indian operations, for which all other objects were resigned, are so far from displaying any sense of system or combination that their desultory and inconclusive nature would lead us to deny him a comprehensive intellect, unless we suppose its range to have been contracted by the sordid passions of his heart."

According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Mahmud appears to the historians of India merely "as an insatiable invader. He was neither a missionary for the propagation of religion in this country nor an architect of empire. The main object of his eastern expeditions seems to have been the acquisition of the 'wealth of Ind' and the destruction of the morale of its custodians. The annexation of the Punjab was a measure of necessity rather than of choice. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to assume that his invasions had no permanent political results in India. He drained the wealth of the country and despoiled it of its military resources to an appalling extent. The Ghaznavid occupation of the Punjab serves as the key to unlock the gates of the Indian interior. Big cracks were made in the great fabric of Indian polity, and it was no longer a question of whether but when that age-old structure would fall. Neither the Arabs nor the Ghaznavid (Yamini) Turks succeeded in adding India to the growing empire of Islam, but they paved the way for the final struggle which overwhelmed the Gangetic kingdoms some two hundred years later."



According to Professor Habib, "No honest historian should seek to hide, and no Musalman acquainted with his faith will try to justify the wanton destruction of temples that followed in the wake of the Ghaznavide army. Contemporary as well as later historians do not attempt to veil the nefarious acts but relate them with pride. It is easy to twist one's conscience and we know only too well how easy it is to find a religious justification for what people wish to do from worldly motives. Islam sanctioned neither the vandalism nor plundering motives of the invader; no principle known to the Shariat justified the uncalled for attack on Hindu princes who had done Mahmud and his subjects no harm; the shameless destruction of places of worship is condemned in law of every creed. And yet Islam, though it was not an inspiring motive, could be utilised as an a **posteriori** justification of what had been done. It was not difficult to mistake the spoilation of non-Muslim populations for a service to Islam, and persons to whom the argument was addressed found it too much in consonance with the promptings of their own passions to examine it critically. So the precepts of Quran were misinterpreted or ignored and the tolerant policy of the second Caliph was cast aside, in order that Mahmud and his myrmidons might be able to plunder Hindu temples with a clear and untroubled conscience."

Mahmud was a great patron of art and letters. Great architects, poets and artists flocked to his court. According to Lane-Poole. "From the cities of the Oxus and the shores of the Caspian, from Persia and Khorasan, he pressed into his service the lights of oriental letters, and compelled them, not unwillingly, to revolve round his sun like planets in his firmament of glory." Utbi was a great literary figure of the time of Mahmud. He was his court historian. His *Kitab-ul-Yamni* or *Tarikh-I-Yamni* is one of the most important authorities on the life and work of Mahmud. However, Utbi cared more for language and style than for facts. He also does not give dates and details.

Firdausi was the most famous poet at the court of Mahmud. He was the author of **Shahnama** which is one of the best pieces of literature. Firdausi has been described as "the immortal Homer of the East." The **Shahnama** has made the name of Mahmud immortal. We are told that Mahmud promised Firdausi 60,000 mishkals of gold for writing the **Shahnama**. However, when the work was done, Mahmud offered the poet only 60,000 silver Dirhams. The poet was so much annoyed that he left Ghazni for good. Later on, Mahmud realised his mistake and sent 60,000 gold coins to the poet. Unfortunately, when money reached the poet, his dead body was being carried to the grave. Before his death, Firdausi wrote a satire on Mahmud in which he referred to his low birth. That satire has been translated by Browne thus :

Long years this Shahnama I toiled to complete,  
That the king might award me some recompense meet,  
But naught save a heart writhing with grief and despair,  
Did I get from those promises empty as air !



Had the sire of the king been some prince of renown,  
 My foremost had surely been graced by a crown.  
 Were his mother a lady of high pedigree,  
 In silver and gold had I stood to knee !  
 But, being by birth not a prince but a boor,  
 To praise of the noble he could not endure !

Al-Beruni also belonged to the court of Mahmud. This versatile genius was born in 973 A.D. in the territory of modern Khiva. When Khiva was conquered by Mahmud in 1017 A.D., Al-Beruni was also captured. He came to India along with Mahmud and stayed here for some time. He was a great mathematician, philosopher astronomer and Sanskrit scholar. He has given a full account of the social and political condition of India. He was very much impressed by the learning of the Hindus. He criticised the Hindus for their isolation from the nations of the world and their want of sympathy and communication with peoples of other countries whom he called *Mlechchhas*. Early marriage was common but there was no custom of widow re-marriage. Marriages were arranged by the parents of children. The Hindus worshipped a large number of gods. The educated Hindus believed in God who was one, eternal, without beginning and end, acting by free will, almighty, all-wise, living, giving life, etc. The administration of justice was liberal and humane. Written complaints were filed and sometimes even oral complaints were entertained. Cases were decided on the testimony of witnesses. Criminal law was comparatively mild. There was no principle of equality of law among the Hindus ; the Brahmans were exempted from capital punishment. The punishment for theft varied in accordance with the value of the property stolen. The share of the state was 1/6th of the produce and Brahmans were completely exempted. Politically India was disunited and rival States fought against one another completely ignoring the interests of the country. The word "national" had no meaning for them. There was a rigid caste system and that made the task of the unification of the country difficult. The country was divided into a large number of small States. Al-Beruni refers to the States of Kashmir, Sind, Malawa Gujarat, Bengal, and Kanauj. He has also referred to the effects of the invasions of Mahmud on India in these words : "Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country and performed those wonderful exploits by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions and like a tale of old in the mouths of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims. This is the reason too why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Banaras and other places."

Asjadi, another poet of Mahmud, wrote the following :—

I do repent of wine and talk of wine,  
 Of idols fair and chains like silver fine,  
 A lip-repentance and a lustful heart,  
 O God, forgive this penitence of mine.

Baihaki another writer in the court of Mahmud, has been described by Lane Poole as "the oriental Mr. Pepys". He wrote *Tarikh-i-Subukhtgin*. Farabi was a philosopher and he also belonged to the court of Mahmud. Uzari was a poet of Mahmud. He came from Rave in Persia. He was given by Mahmud 14,000 Dirhams for writing a short panegyric. Asadi Tusi was a native of Khorasan. Unsuri was the greatest genius of the age and he had a large number of students and many acknowledged him as their master. Mahmud set up a university at Ghazni. He also set up a museum in which were placed the various things brought to Ghazni.

Mahmud patronized artists and architects. A large number of Madrasas, Khankahas and mosques were built in Ghazni. The Celestial Bride which is described as "a wonder of the East", was one of the most important buildings of Mahmud. It was a big mosque which was surrounded by 3,000 quarters for the residence of the teachers and students of the university. The Band-i-Sultan, a bridge across the river Nawar, was constructed. Under Mahmud, Ghazni became the cradle of Islamic culture. It became one of the most beautiful cities of Central Asia.

Mahmud was very strict in the administration of justice. It is stated that once upon a time a person came to the Sultan with a complaint that his nephew had an evil eye on his wife and was not prepared to desist from visiting her in spite of his protests. Mahmud asked the person to come to him once again when his nephew paid a visit to his wife. The man did as ordered. Mahmud went personally to the house where the nephew was and cut off his head with his own hands. It is said that a merchant brought a suit against Prince Masud, the son of Sultan Mahmud. The only way for the Prince to escape from appearing before the Qazi was that he paid him the money.

A Muslim mystic referred to the work of Mahmud in these words: "He is a stupid fellow, without being able to manage what he already possesses, he yet goes out to conquer new countries." The result was that within a few years of his death, the Empire founded by Mahmud disappeared. There was no law and order in the country. The brigand chiefs did whatever they pleased. There was no well-organized system of police. There was no sense of unity within the Empire. All the officers of Mahmud were worried more about the expansion of the Empire than about the establishment of a good system of administration. No wonder, the whole of the superstructure fell.

### Successors of Mahmud

The rule of the successors of Mahmud lasted from 1030 to 1186 A.D. It was marked by discord, degeneracy and decay. There were in all 15 rulers after Mahmud. One of them—Ibrahim—ruled as many as 40 years. Bahram Shah ruled for 35 years. Khusru Malik ruled nominally for 26 years. In all their troubles and misfortunes, India was the asylum of the successors of Mahmud.

**Masud (1030 to 1040 A.D.)**

Before his death, Mahmud divided his empire between his two sons, Masud and Muhammad. However, there was no peace after his death. There was a struggle for supremacy between Masud and Muhammad and ultimately Masud was successful and he blinded his brother Muhammad and put him in prison. Masud got the blessings of the Khalifa on whom he bestowed enormous gifts.

Masud was a true son of his father. He was full of ambition, courage and war-like zeal. He had a reputation for being a Rustam.

The court of Ghazni in the time of Masud was without an equal at that time. Baihaki refers to the splendour of the court of Masud. The habit of drinking was taken to extremes and Masud himself became the leader of a notorious party of drunkards and debauchees. The following is a contemporary account: "On Tuesday the 12th of Muharram the Amir went to the Firozi Garden and sat in the Green Pavilion on the Golden Plain. A sumptuous feast was ordered. The Amir Maudud (Masud's son) and the Minister came and sat down, and the army passed in review before them. First passed the star of Amir Maudud, the canopy, waving standards and two hundred slaves of the household with jackets of mail and spears, and many led horses and camels, and infantry with their banners displayed and a hundred and seventy slaves fully armed and equipped with all their stars borne before them. After them came Irtigin the Chamberlain and his slaves to the number of eighty, and then fifty military slaves of the household, preceded by twenty officers finely accoutred, with many led horses and camels followed by other officers till all had passed.

"It was now near mid-day prayer, when the Amir bade his son and the Minister and the chief Chamberlain and the officers to sit down to the feast. He too sat down and ate bread.....The Amir said, 'Let us begin without ceremony, for we have come into the country, and we will drink in the Firozi Garden.' Accordingly much wine was brought immediately from the pavilion into the garden, and fifty goblets and flagons were placed in the middle of a small tent.

"The goblets were sent round and the Amir said, 'Let us keep fair measure and fill the cups evenly, in order that there may be no unfairness'. Each goblet contained nearly a pint. They began to get jolly and the minstrels sang. Bu-l-Hasan drank five goblets, his head was affected at the sixth, he lost his senses at the seventh, and began to vomit at the eighth, when the servants carried him off. Bu-l-Ala the physician dropped his head at the fifth cup, and he also was carried off. Khalil Daud drank ten; Siyabiruz nine, and both were borne away to the hill of Dailaman. Bu-Naim drank twelve and ran away. Daud Maimandi fell down drunk, and the singers and buffoons all rolled off tipsy topsy, when the Sultan and Khwaja Abdur Razak alone remained.

"When the Khwaja had drunk eighteen cups, he made his obeisance and prepared to go, saying to the Amir 'if you give your slave any more, he will lose his respect for your Majesty as well as his own wits'. The Amir laughed and gave him leave to go, when he got up and departed in a more respectful manner.

"After this the Amir kept on drinking and enjoying himself. He drank twenty-seven full goblets of half a maund each. He then arose, called for a basin of water and his praying carpet washed his face and read the mid-day prayers as well as the afternoon ones and so acquitted himself that you would have said he had not drunk a single cup. He then got on an elephant and returned to the palace.

"I witnessed the whole of this scene with mine own eyes I, Abu-l-Fadil."

### **Hasnak**

Hasnak was a minister of Masud. He was accused of Karmatian heresy. He denied the charge but in spite of that he was sentenced to death. The ex-Minister requested Khawaja Ahmad, the new minister, to have pity on him and his family and the Khawaja promised to grant his wish. However, the Khalifa directed Masud to execute Hasnak, the Karmatian, who had offered fealty to the house of Egypt. Ultimately he was mercilessly hanged and his head was served up in a dish at a feast. When the mother of Hasnak heard of the end of her son, she said: "What a fortune was my son's; a king like Mahmud gave him this world and one like Masud, the next." After the dismissal of Hasnak, Masud placed the affairs of the state in the hands of Khawaja Ahmad Maimandi whom he liberated from prison. To begin with the Khawaja hesitated but ultimately agreed to become minister. Masud invested Khawaja with a dignity second to his own and ordered all to execute the orders of the Khawaja as if they were his own. Under the Khawaja, the administration began to show new vigour and activity.

### **Ariyarak**

As regards the affairs in India, Ariyarak had been in charge of the same. He was an ambitious man and he behaved like an autocrat without caring for the commands of his sovereign. He was contumacious and arrogant. Whenever an attempt was made to enforce the royal authority, he created trouble. He had given proof of his ambition even during the time of Mahmud but nothing came out of his designs on account of the might of Mahmud, Khawaja Ahmad Hasan was able to induce Ariyarak to go to Ghazni and he promised to intercede with Sultan Masud on his behalf. Ariyarak accompanied the Khawaja to Ghazni. There he was invited to a drinking feast and to his utter surprise was arrested by Baktagin, the captain of the guards. His feet were bound in fetters and he was thrown in prison. Probably, he was poisoned afterwards. All his wealth was confiscated.



### Niyaltgin

Ahmad Niyaltgin was put in charge of the Indian province in place of Ariyarak. He was asked to leave his son at Ghazni as a hostage. The new governor was as ambitious as Ariyarak and in the words of Baihaki, he also "turned away from the path of rectitude and took a crooked course."

When Niyaltgin came to India, he found that it was difficult to work with his colleague, Qazi Shiraz. The latter was a hot-tempered and pugnacious man. He wanted to impose his will in everything. Before appointing him the Governor, the Khawaja had warned him not to encroach upon the jurisdiction of Qazi Shiraz. The following were the instructions of the Khawaja to Niyaltgin: "You must not say anything to any person respecting the political or revenue matters, so that no one's word may be heard against you, but you must perform all the duties of a commander so that that fellow may not be able to put his hand upon your sinews and drag you down." In spite of this, Niyaltgin did not consult Qazi Shiraz in the discharge of his duties. Niyaltgin and Qazi Shiraz quarrelled over the appointment of the commander of an expedition. The matter was referred home and Niyaltgin was allowed to command the expedition. Niyaltgin took an expedition to Banaras which was wholly successful. A lot of booty fell into the hands of Niyaltgin. Qazi Shiraz sent spies to inform the Sultan that Niyaltgin was giving himself out as the son of Sultan Mahmud and was trying to become independent. The other enemies of Niyaltgin also poisoned the mind of Sultan Mahmud and impressed upon him the necessity of taking immediate action. The conduct of Niyaltgin himself confirmed the reports of his enemies as he did not send the share of the booty from Banaras to Ghazni. Ultimately, it was decided to send Tilak to India to restore order. Tilak was a Hindu of low birth but a man of great ability and courage. He was the private secretary of Masud and the official interpreter between the Hindus and the State. Referring to the appointment of Tilak, Baihaki observes thus: "Wise men do not wonder at such facts because nobody is born great, men become such. But it is important that they should leave a good name behind."

### Tilak

When Tilak reached India, the followers of Niyaltgin disappeared and he himself had to run for his life. Niyaltgin was pursued by Tilak and defeated. He escaped from the battle-field but a price of 5 lacs of Dirhams was put on his head by Tilak. The Jats caught hold of Niyaltgin and cut off his head. Masud was happy to hear the news of victory.

### Hansi

Masud was so very happy about the success of Tilak that he decided to fulfil his old vow of capturing the fort of Hansi, a place near Hissar in the Punjab. The Khawaja told Masud that it was not proper to undertake the expedition under the prevailing circumstances. However, the reply of the Sultan was: "The vow is upon

my neck and accomplish it, I will, in my own person." Masud started from Ghazni in October 1037 A.D. and reached the town of Hansi. The fort was considered to be impregnable and a siege was laid to it. The Hindus defended the fort with great courage but in spite of that the Muslims took it by storm. The Brahmans and other men of dignity were killed. Women and children were made slaves. From Hansi, Sultan Masud went to Sonapat, a place near Delhi. Its ruler surrendered without any fighting and after getting a lot of booty, the Sultan went back to Ghazni.

The Khawaja was right in advising Sultan Mahmud not to lead an expedition to India. Events showed that the expedition was a blunder. The Saljuq Turks took advantage of the absence of the Sultan from Ghazni and began to press hard on the territories of Ghazni. When the people of Balkh complained of the acts of high-handedness of the Turks, Masud decided to advance against them. Tughril Beg, the Saljuq Turk, attacked Ghazni and sacked a portion of the town. In 1037 A.D., he captured Nishapur and brought Khorasan under his rule. In 1040 A.D., Sultan Masud was overpowered by the Turks at a place near Merv. After his defeat, Masud decided to come to India although he was advised not to do so by his able Minister, the Khawaja. When the royal party reached Marigalah, a pass situated between Rawalpindi and Attock, a few miles east of Hasan Abdal, the Turkish and Hindu slaves mutinied and put on the throne Muhammad, his younger brother. Masud was put into prison and then put to death in 1041 A.D.

Firishta tells us that Masud was "a prince of uncommon personal strength and courage, affable and of easy access, generous to prodigality, particularly to learned men, whose company he was so extremely fond of, that many were induced to come from all parts to his court." Masud patronized men of letters. He built mosques. He endowed schools and colleges in various parts of his empire. He possessed dignity and a strong will. In spite of his splendour, he met with a terrible end. No wonder, Baihaki observes thus: "Man has no power to strive against fate."

### Successors of Masud

Masud was succeeded by his son, Maudud. He defeated Muhammad, his uncle, who was responsible for the death of his father. Maudud was succeeded by many weak rulers. During their reigns, the pressure of the Saljuqs continued. Qazi Minhaj tells us that during the reign of Ibrahim who ascended the throne in 1059 A.D., a fresh vigour came in the administration. "The troubles and disorders which had befallen upon that empire, through the vicissitudes of the times and continual warfare, were all, during his reign, remedied and rectified and the affairs of the empire of the great Mahmud assumed fresh vigour."

The advance of the Saljuq Turks continued. Arslan, the last independent ruler of Ghazni, was defeated by the Saljuq Turks.

He ran away to India where he died in the year 1117 A.D. The Saljuq Turks established themselves at Ghazni and controlled



Bahram, the Ghaznavide ruler. As a matter of fact, Bahram owed the crown to the Turks. Unfortunately, quarrels arose between Bahram and the Malik of Ghor. A Suri prince was put to death

by the orders of Bahram. The brother of the deceased attacked Ghazni but was defeated and killed. Ala-ud-din Hussain of Ghor, another brother, took a vow to have revenge upon the house of Ghazni. He marched upon Ghazni at the head of a large army and won a victory in 1155 A.D. against Bahram. After the victory, men were slaughtered in thousands and women and children were enslaved. "Of all the double buildings with which the kings had enriched their stately capital hardly a stone was left to tell of its grandeur. The very graves of the hated dynasty were dug up and the royal bones scattered to the curs—but even Afghan vengeance spared the tomb of Mahmud, the idol of Muslim soldiers. The tomb and two lofty minarets, at a little distance from the modern town, alone stand to show that Ghazni was. On one of the minarets one may still read the resonant titles of the idol-breaker and on the marble tomb an inscription entreats: **God's mercy for the great Amir Mahmud**". Ala-ud-Din Hussain earned for himself the title of **Jahan-soz**, the World Burner.

King Bahram had escaped from Ghazni to India after its fall before Ala-ud-din Hussain. After some time, Bahram went back to Ghazni and recovered his lost power. After the death of Bahram, his son Khusrau Shah came to the throne. He was thoroughly incompetent to deal with the situation. He loved pleasure. No wonder, the administration fell into disorder. It became difficult to control the Amirs. The power of the house of Ghazni declined and that of the house of Ghor rose. After the death of Ala-ud-Din Jahan-soz's son in 1163 A.D., his nephew Ghiyas-ud-Din bin Sam succeeded to the territory of Ghor. He brought Ghazni under his control and gave it to his brother Muhammad Ghori. Muhammad Ghori led many attacks upon India. In 1181 A.D. Muhammad appeared before the gates of Lahore and forced Khusrau Malik to make peace with him and also hand over his son as security for the fulfilment of the obligations under the treaty. Muhammad Ghori once again besieged Lahore and over-ran the whole of the country. The fort of Sialkot was captured and garrisoned. In 1186 A.D., Lahore was captured. Khusrau Malik was persuaded to come out of the fort to receive his own son who was alleged to have been released by Muhammad Ghori. When Khusrau Malik did so, he was taken a prisoner and sent to Ghazni. After some years of imprisonment, he was put to death probably in 1201 A.D. Thus ended the rule of the successors of Mahmud.

### SUGGESTED READINGS

- |                     |   |
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## CHAPTER V

# Muhammad Ghori or Muhammad of Ghur

The real founder of Muslim Empire in India was Muiz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam properly known as Shihab-ud-Din Muhammad Ghori or Muhammad of Ghur. It is true that Muhammad-bin-Qasim was the first Muslim invader of India but he failed to carve out a Muslim empire in India on account of his premature death. Mahmud of Ghazni also failed to set up a Muslim empire in India and the only permanent effect of his invasions was the annexation of the Punjab. It was left to Muhammad Ghori to build up a Muslim empire in India on a secure footing.

The district of Ghur is situated in hills between Ghazni and Herat. It was an independent state in the 10th century but its ruler, Muhammad-bin Suri, was defeated by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1009 A.D. After that, the rulers of Ghur continued to be the vassals of the rulers of Ghazni. However, they took advantage of the falling fortunes of the house of Mahmud after 1030 A.D. There were other things which complicated matters. Under the orders of King Bahram of Ghazni, Malik Qutub-ud-din Hasan, a prince of Ghur, was put to death. The result was that Saif-ud-din Suri, the brother of the deceased, invaded Ghazni and defeated Bahram. Bahram also retaliated and put to death Saif-ud-din. The result was that Ala-ud-din Husain the younger brother of Saif-ud-din, completely destroyed the city of Ghazni in 1155 A. D. Ala-ud-din also conquered Bemain, Turkistan, Jerun, Bast, Gharjistan and Herat. It is true that towards the end of his reign he lost Balkh, Turkistan and Herat, but he maintained his hold over other parts of his dominions. He was succeeded by Saif-ud-din who in turn was succeeded by Ghiyas-ud-din. Ghiyas-ud-din recovered Ghazni and put it in the charge of his brother Muhammad Ghori. Muhammad Ghori enjoyed practically complete independence in Ghazni but he continued to inscribe the name of his brother on his coins and also treated him as his suzerain.

Many reasons have been given for the invasion of India by Muhammad Ghori. It is pointed out that he was a very ambitious

and enterprising prince. He considered himself to be the heir to the Punjab which belonged to the empire of Ghazni. Reasons of security also demanded that he must defeat Khusrau Malik, the ruler of the Punjab and the Karmathians of Multan. His was an age of military glory and Muhammad Ghori was fired with the love of conquest and power. He would like to have prestige and wealth. Being a Muslim, he would like to conquer the Hindus of India and spread Islam in that country.

### **Multan and Sindh**

The first invasion of Muhammad Ghori was directed against Multan in 1175 A.D. The heretics were easily defeated and Multan was captured. An orthodox governor was appointed for Multan. From Multan, he marched to Uch in Upper Sindh. The relations between the ruler of Bhatti and his wife were strained. Muhammad Ghori took advantage of them and promised to marry the daughter of that lady if she finished her husband. The Queen poisoned her husband but her daughter was not made the chief lady of the harem of Muhammad Ghori. Scholars doubt the genuineness of the story and point out that the Bhatti Rajputs did not hold any part of Sindh and the ruler of Uch at that time was most probably a Muslim. In 1182 A.D., Muhammad Ghori invaded Lower Sindh and compelled its ruler to submit.

### **Anhilwara**

Muhammad Ghori also invaded Anhilwara or Patan, capital of Bhima II, the Vaghela ruler of Gujarat. However, he was defeated by its ruler. He had to retrace his steps. According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "The sufferings of the retreat far exceeded those of the advance and it was but a miserable remnant of the army that reached Ghazni." Habibullah says that Muhammad Ghori was lucky to escape with his beaten army.

### **Punjab**

Muhammad Ghori realized that it was not possible to conquer India through Sindh and Multan and the key to Hindustan lay through the Punjab. No wonder, he decided to conquer the Punjab. In 1179 A.D., he attacked and captured Peshawar which was under the ruler of the Punjab. In 1181 A.D., Muhammad Ghori proceeded against Khusrau Malik. Instead of fighting, Khusrau Malik sent to Muhammad Ghori costly presents and his own son as a hostage. In 1185 A.D., he attacked the Punjab once again and plundered the countryside. He also captured the fortress of Sialkot and garrisoned it with his own troops. When Khusrau Malik found that Muhammad Ghori was determined to oust him from the Punjab, he entered into an alliance with the Khokhars. With their help, Khusrau Malik besieged Sialkot but he was unable to capture the same. In 1186 A.D. Muhammad Ghori once again came to the Punjab and besieged Lahore. He had been invited by Raja Chakra Deo of Jammu who was not on good terms with Khusrau Malik. When Muhammad Ghori failed to defeat Khusrau Malik in a pitched battle, he resorted to a

stratagem. He persuaded Khusrau Malik to pay him a visit and guaranteed him safe conduct. Muhammad Ghorī also released the son of Khusrau Malik and when the latter came out to meet his son he was made a prisoner and later on put to death in 1192 A.D.

### **First Battle of Tarain (1191)**

It is true that Muhammad Ghorī had become the master of the Punjab, Multan and Sindh, but he was far from being the master of Hindustan. There were many wealthy and powerful Rajput kingdoms in the heart of India which were ready to check his further advance in case he dared to invade their territories. The Rajputs were proud of their pedigrees and jealous of their honour. Fighting was their hobby and they could never think of surrender. Prithvi Raj Chauhan or Rai Pithora, the ruler of Delhi and Ajmer, decided to check the advance of Muhammad Ghorī. He marched against the Ghorī chief at the head of a large army which, according to Firishta, included 2 lakh horses and 3,000 elephants. He was also helped by his fellow Rajput princes. Jai Chandra, the Rathor Raja of Kanauj was the only Rajput prince who kept aloof from the war as Prithvi Raj had insulted him by carrying away his daughter by force. The armies met at Tarain, a village 14 miles away from Thanesar in 1191 A.D. Muhammad Ghorī followed the tactics of the right, left and centre and himself occupied a position in the middle of his army. The Rajputs attacked both the wings of the Muslim army which was scattered in all directions. Muhammad Ghorī attacked Govind Rai, the brother of Prithvi Raj, on the mouth with his sword and knocked out his teeth. Govind Rai returned the blow and struck Muhammad Ghorī in the arm and gave a severe wound. Stunned by his blow, Muhammad Ghorī turned back and began to bleed. His strength was exhausted and he was about to fall down from his horse. However, a Khilji soldier helped Muhammad Ghorī and carried him off the field of battle. The Muslim army dispersed in all directions. It was pursued for 40 miles and after that the chase was given up. Muhammad Ghorī went back to Ghazni. The Rajputs besieged Sarhind but were not able to capture it easily.

### **Second Battle of Tarain (1192)**

When Muhammad Ghorī reached Gazni, he punished all those officers and soldiers who had run away from the battle-field. They were publicly disgraced and paraded round the city. It is stated that after the first battle of Tarain in 1191 A.D., Muhammad Ghorī "never slumbered in ease nor waked but in sorrow and anxiety". In 1192 A.D., he marched from Gazni at the head of a large army consisting of 1,20,000 men. He encamped once again near Tarain. There was a bloody battle. As many as 150 Rajput princes fought on the side of Prithvi Raj. To begin with, the Hindu cavalry was able to check the advance of the Muslims. The battle continued from morning till sun-set. However, towards the end, Muhammad Ghorī with the help of 12,000 horses made a desperate charge and "carried death and destruction throughout the



Hindu Camp." The Rajputs were not able to stand the charge and were defeated. According to Firishṭa, "Like a great building, this prodigious concourse of the Rajputs, once shaken, tottered to its fall and was lost in its ruins." Govind Rai was killed in the battle-field. Likewise, Khande Rai who had wounded Muhammad Ghori in 1191 A.D., was killed. Prithvi Raj got disheartened, got down from his elephant and tried to escape but was captured near the town of Sirsuti.

There are many versions about the death of Prithvi Raj. According to Minhaj-us-Siraj, Prithvi Raj was captured and sent to hell. According to Hassan Nizami, Prithvi Raj was taken to Ajmer and later on was put to death as he was found to be guilty of treason. The view of Chand Bardai is that Prithvi Raj was taken to Ghazni and there put to death. The view that he was taken to Ajmer is preferred as certain coins of Prithvi Raj with the Sanskrit superscription "Hammira" have been found.

Minhaj-us-Siraj has given the following account of the second battle of Tarain: "Next year the Sultan assembled another army and advanced to Hindustan, to avenge his defeat. A trustworthy person named Muiz-ud-din, one of the principal men of the hills of Tolak, informed me that he was in this army, and that its force amounted to 120,000 horsemen bearing armour. Before the Sultan could arrive, the fort of Sarhind had capitulated, and the enemy was encamped in the vicinity of Narain (Tarain). The Sultan drew up in battle array, leaving his main body in the rear, with the banners, canopies, and elephants to the number of several divisions. His plan of attack being formed, he advanced quietly. The light unarmoured horsemen were made into four divisions of 10,000 and were directed to advance and harass the enemy on all sides, on the right and on the left, in the front and in the rear, with their arrows. When the enemy collected his forces to attack, they were to support each other, and to charge at full speed. By these tactics the infidels were worsted, the Almighty gave us the victory over them, and they fled."

The second battle of Tarain is a landmark in the history of India. It ensured the ultimate success of Muhammad Ghori against the Indian states. According to V. A. Smith, "The second battle of Tarain in 1192 may be regarded as the decisive contest which ensured the ultimate success of the Mohammadan attack on Hindustan. All the numerous subsequent attacks were merely consequences of the over-whelming defeat of the Hindu league on the historic plain to the north of Delhi."

According to Dr. Habibullah, "Muizzuddin's victory on the plains of Tarain was not, as is generally supposed, an isolated personal triumph, nor was it an accident. It was, on the one hand, the execution of a deliberate plan by a resolute conqueror and, on the other, the consummation of a process which extended over the whole of the 12th century. His was only the most successful of the many attempts made by the Turks from the northwest to obtain a foothold in Hindustan all of which may therefore be

regarded as preliminaries to Tarain. The Shansabani conqueror thus perhaps unwittingly, brought to a successful end a century of reconnoitering activity, a programme of military action of which he was not the originator. Mahmud's brilliant campaigns had shown the way, and the Ghaznavide governors of Punjab, although serving a fast-declining empire, yet maintained pressure on the Hindu states of the Gangetic valley." (*The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 57-58.)

There was a general demoralisation in the country and there was none among the Rajputs who could bring under his banner all his fellow princes to stop the further advance of the Muslims in India. The result was that the Muslims were able to capture Sirsuti, Samana, Kuhram and Hansi without much difficulty. Ajmer was captured and plundered. Thousands of people were put to the sword. The Sultan also "destroyed the pillars and foundations of idol temples and built in their stead mosques and colleges and the precepts of Islam and the customs of the law were divulged and established." A son of Prithvi Raj was put in charge of Ajmer and he promised to pay tribute. Leaving Qutb-ud-Din Aibak in-charge of his Indian possessions, Muhammad Ghori went back to Ghazni. In a short time, Qutb-ud-din conquered Meerut, Kol and Delhi and made Delhi the seat of his government.

### Kanauj

It is true that when Prithvi Raj was defeated in 1192, Jai Chandra of Kanauj felt happy but he did not know that he would meet a similar fate before long. Muhammad Ghori realised the significance of Kanauj in India. Its ruler was considered to be the greatest king of India, having the largest territory. Such a ruler could not be allowed to remain independent. No doubt Muhammad Ghori marched against Kanauj in 1194 A.D. and the Rathor ruler fell like the Chuhani. "When the two armies met, there was great carnage; the infidels sustained by their number and the Muslims by their courage; but in the end infidels fled and the faithful were victorious. The slaughter of the Hindus was immense. None was spared, except women and children, and the carnage of the men went on until the earth was weary." In the battle of Chandwara, Jai Chandra was struck in the eye by a fatal arrow and he fell down dead from the elephant. The Rajputs were demoralised and they ran away from the battlefield. Muhammad Ghori proceeded to the fortress of Asni where Jai Chandra had stored his treasure. Asni was captured and the treasure was plundered. From Asni, Muhammad Ghori proceeded towards Banaras. About 1,000 temples were destroyed in Banaras and mosques were raised on their sites. Muhammad Ghori carried away treasure to Ghazni upon 14,000 camels. Ibn-al-Athir tells us that among the elephants captured by Muhammad Ghori, there was a wild elephant. A person who saw it told him that when the elephants were brought before Muhammad Ghori and were ordered to salute, they all saluted except the wild elephant. According to Prof. S. R. Sharma, "The fall of Jai Chandra

of Chandwar made Muhammad the master of the political as well as the religious capitals of Hindustan, Kanauj and Banaras."

It is to be noted that the descendents of Jai Chandra continued to rule over a fraction of their kingdom which Muhammad Ghori was not able to occupy. Even Kanauj was recovered by the Gahadwaras a few years after its conquest.

In 1195-96, Muhammad Ghori invaded India and defeated Jadon Bhatti Rajputs. He also advanced to Bihar and occupied a portion of it.

For the next few years, Muhammad Ghori was busy fighting the Turks in Central Asia. In his absence, the affairs of India were managed by Qutb-ud-din Aibaq. The latter consolidated the Muslim position in Ajmer. He also waged war against Raja Bhim Deva of Anhilwara who had defeated even Muhammad Ghori. Kanwar Pal, the general of Bhim Deva, was defeated and killed. Huge booty fell into the hands of the Muslims.

### **Bundelkhand**

In 1197-98 A.D. Aibaq conquered Badaun from a Rashtrakuta Rajput. He reoccupied Banaras which had been lost after its first conquest. He also reoccupied Chandwara and Kanauj. He overran a part of Malwa. In 1202-3 A.D., Aibaq invaded Kalinjar which was the military capital of Paramardi Deva, the Chandela ruler of Bundelkhand. The Chandelas fought with courage and bravery. The fort of Kalinjar was besieged. The ruler was willing to make peace but he died before he could do so. The resistance was continued after his death. Ultimately, the Chandelas were made to come to terms as the water supply of the fort was cut off. Thus Kalinjar, Mahoba and Khajuraho were occupied.

### **Conquest of Bihar**

While Qutb-ud-din Aibaq was thus busy, one of his commanders named Ikhtiyar-ud-din Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji was planning the conquest of Bihar and Bengal. The commander was a curious specimen of the *genus homo* with his arms reaching up to the calves of his legs while standing erect. With these long arms, he reached the easternmost parts of Northern India. In 1197 A.D., Ikhtiyar-ud-din organized an attack against Bihar with 200 horsemen. Odantapuri, the capital of Bihar, was looted and plundered. Raja Indruman was coward and without giving a fight, he ran away. The Buddhist monasteries in Bihar were destroyed. Thousands of monks were put to the sword.

### **Conquest of Bengal**

Ikhtiyar-ud-din was so much emboldened by his success in Bihar that he planned the conquest of Bengal which was ruled by Lakshman Sena of the Sena dynasty. It is true that the ruler was not an old man but he was absolutely lethargic and negligent of his duties. Although the invaders were in Bihar, he did nothing to protect his territory. No wonder, Ikhtiyar-ud-din took advantage

of this state of affairs in Bengal. Some time in 1204-5 A.D. he started at the head of his army and suddenly appeared at Nadia which was one of the two capitals of Bengal and the residence of its kings. It is stated that only 18 horsemen had accompanied him to Nadia and the rest of the army was left behind. The people thought that he was a merchant who had brought horses for sale. In this manner, he reached the gate of the palace of the Raja. He drew his sword and commenced the attack. The Raja was at his dinner. All of a sudden, a cry was raised at the gate of his palace and in the city. Before the Raja could ascertain what had occurred, Ikhtiyar-ud-din rushed into the palace and put a number of men to the sword. The Raja fled bare-footed by the back door of the palace and his whole treasure and all his wives, maid-servants, attendants and women fell into the hands of the invader. When his main army arrived the whole city was brought under subjection. Ikhtiyar-ud-Din moved towards North and established himself at Lakhnauti. Lakshman Sena took shelter in Eastern Bengal where he continued to rule for some time. No attempt was made by Ikhtiyar-ud-din to conquer the whole of Bengal.

According to Dr. Habibullah, "The ease with which the king was put to flight and the city occupied, must have surprised even Bakhtiyar himself. The story of 'the 18 horsemen defeating a great king' has, at any rate, evoked sceptical comments from a number of Hindu scholars. Minhaj's veracity has been questioned and arguments have been advanced to reduce the account to sheer myth. There is, however, little need to feel apologetic for the supposed cowardice of the Sena king; even were he really so, to consider his conduct as typical of the Bengali people would be historically incorrect. Hasty, and what ungenerous critics would call, shameful flights have been the lot of even greater men and admittedly heroic peoples. Rajput recklessness has an element of romance in it but of little practical wisdom. It is possible to reject the story altogether. To dismiss it on the ground, as Mr. Banerji did, that the Hindu accounts never speak of Nadia or Navadwip as a Sena capital or that 'Rai Lakhmanias' cannot be identical with Lakshmanasena who, in Mr. Banerji's view had long been dead is to base positive history on negative argument. For Bakhtiyar's occupation of a portion of the Sena kingdom following his raid on Nadia is an undisputed fact. It is true one cannot claim a literal accuracy for Minhaj's account, but the results of recent research certainly do not strengthen Mr. Banerji's arguments. There is, on the other hand, little improbability in the story, for Bengal from all accounts presented not many elements of strength. A Brahmin-ridden, disintegrated society, with a king whose youthful valour and military energy had given way to a supine addiction to religion and poetry, a top-heavy, hollow administration, and with vassals finding strength to declare independence, Lakshmanasena's kingdom was anything but a force that could put up sustained frontal resistance. The **Turushka** had become a bogey and everywhere inspired a paralysing fear. The superstitious 'prophecy' about the 'long armed Turushka'



eventually destroying the Sena kingdom is perhaps an overstatement ; the king's refusal to fly with his frightened courtiers from the threatened zone shows that rational courage had not entirely taken leave of him. But the apprehension of an impending catastrophe was undoubtedly felt : for, epigraphic evidence shows that the king in his 25th year (1203 A.D.) performed a great sacrifice to propitiate the Gods for help in averting it. Every fresh advance of the Turk only deepened this fear and destroyed self-confidence. The easy success of Bakhtiyar's noon-day attack thus needs no other explanation. Boldly led surprise attacks can paralyse even more courageous and well-prepared forces. It is worthy of note that the city of Nadia was occupied only after the main force had arrived." (**The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India**, pp. 71-73.)

### Tibet

Ikhtiyar-ud-din began to dream of carrying his arms beyond the Himalayas. About the middle of the year 1205, he set out with an army of 10,000 horses on his new adventure. He entered into a treaty with the Raja of Kamrup who agreed not to molest him and to assist him, at least with advice. On the way there was a river which was spanned by a stone bridge. Leaving a force to hold the bridge, Ikhtiyar-ud-din set out for Tibet. It is not certain in what direction he marched or what part of Tibet was his objective. After 15 days of marching, he reached a strong fortress standing in the open country which was well cultivated and thickly populated. The inhabitants joined the garrison of the fortress in opposing the invaders and though Ikhtiyar-ud-din held his ground throughout the day, his losses were very heavy and ultimately he decided to retreat. During his retreat he found that the natives had destroyed or obstructed the roads and burnt all vegetation. There was neither fodder nor fuel and the army was forced to live on the flesh of its horses. The bridge had been destroyed and no boats were available. The Raja of Kamrup also attacked the retreating army and drove it into the river. Ikhtiyar-ud-din managed to reach Lakhnauti with about hundred horsemen. According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "This was the greatest disaster which had yet befallen the Muslim arms in India. Armies had been defeated but Ikhtiyar-ud-din's force had been all but annihilated and it would have been well for him to have perished with it, for he could not show his face in the streets of Lakhnauti without encountering the gibes and reproaches of the wives and families of those whom he had led to their death .."

While this was what was happening in India, Muhammad Ghori was routed by the Turks at Andkhud in 1204 A.D., "a defeat which dealt a fatal blow at his military reputation in India." Rumours even spread in India that Muhammad Ghori was killed. The result was that the Khokhars revolted under their leader, Rai Sal and defeated the Deputy Governor of Multan. They plundered Lahore and blocked the strategic road between the Punjab and Ghazni. As Aibak failed to handle the situation, Muhammad Ghori found it necessary to come to India in person. At the

close of 1205 A.D., the combined forces of Mohammad Ghor and Aibak inflicted a crushing defeat on Khokhars, between the Jhelum and the Chenab. A large number of Khokhars were slaughtered and a still larger number was captured, and enslaved. The number of slaves was so large that five Khokhar slaves were sold for a Dinar in the camp.

Muhammad Ghor reached Lahore in February 1206 A.D. and made arrangements for going back to Ghazni in order to carry on his struggle against the Turks. Unfortunately, when he was on his way back to Ghazni, he was assassinated on the banks of the river Indus on 15th March, 1206 by some Shia rebels and Hindu Khokhars. The body of the Sultan was carried to Ghazni and buried in his capital.

According to Dr. Habibullah, with the death of Muhammad Ghor died his empire across Hindu Kush. Within a few years, Mahmood, his nephew and successor at Ghor, was compelled to acknowledge the suzerainty of Khwarizm Shah. After his death, Shansabani Kingdom was practically absorbed within the Khwarizmi Empire. The dissolution of Ghor was complete when in 1215 A.D., Yalduz, Muhammad Ghor's viceroy, was driven out and Ghazni was attached to the appanage of Allauddin's crown prince Jalaluddin.

### Estimate

It cannot be denied that Muhammad Ghor was not so great a general as Mahmud of Ghazni. Unlike Mahmud, he suffered a number of defeats at the hands of Indian rulers. He did not possess the grandeur of Mahmud. However, he was superior to him as a constructive statesman. Mahmud kept himself busy in conquering and collecting riches but Muhammad Ghor was able to build up an empire which lasted for centuries. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "Wealth, not territory, the extirpation of idolatry and not conquest, were the objects of his (Mahmud's) raids; and when these were accomplished, he cared nothing for the myriad people of India." However, Muhammad Ghor made up his mind from the very beginning to build up an empire in India and succeeded in planting the banner of the Crescent permanently on the Indian soil. Muhammad Ghor was not so fanatical as Mahmud but he was certainly more political than his great predecessor. He decided to take advantage of the rotten political condition of India and build up a Muslim empire in India.

Mohammad Ghor was a shrewd diplomat who could deal with every type of friend or foe. He saw the weakness of his enemies and did all that he could to exploit them to his own benefit. It is true that he was cruel at times but it cannot be denied that he was also kind and generous. He was not an idealist and no wonder his approach to political matters was practical, well calculated and realistic.

According to Sir W. W. Hunter, "He (Muhammad Ghor) was no religious knight-errant of Islam like Mahmud of Ghazni but a practical conqueror. The objects of his distant expeditions were not temples but provinces."

According to Dr. Habibullah, "There could be no two opinions as to the place Mu'izzuddin should occupy in history. Unlike Mahmud of Ghazni, he was a practical statesman; of the rotten political structure of India he took the fullest advantage. As in the founder of the Mughal empire, his sovereign quality lay in the steadfast determination with which he pursued his objective and in his refusal to accept a defeat as final. Against his far more gifted rival, the Kwanism Shah, his Central Asian empire, it is true, could have had only an ephemeral existence. But as in the case of Babar, his Indian conquests survived. If he failed to found a dynasty, he yet trained up a band of men who were to prove more loyal to his ideals and better fitted to maintain his empire. In choice of men he displayed a singular talent, for to slaves like Aibak, Yalduz, and Tughril he owed most of his success. His almost annual campaigns from the Jaxartes to the Jumna display a military talent of no mean order. His military pre-occupations probably left him little leisure for aesthetic recreations, but he was not indifferent to learning and scholarship. The celebrated philosopher and savant, Fakhruddin Razi, and the famous classical poet Nizami Uruzi adorned the Ghoride court and have paid deserving tributes to the mental qualities of their friend and patron." (*The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 78-9)

It is pointed out that Fakhruddin Razi dedicated one of his works, the *Lataiful Ghiyasi*, to Muhammad Ghorī's elder brother Ghiyasuddin. Nizami Uruzi was a great friend of Allaiddin and lived in the Ghor court down to the reign of Ghiyasuddin and Mu'izzuddin. Another reputed scholar who enjoyed the patronage of Mu'izzuddin was Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah. He was the author of a voluminous book on genealogies and a versified history of the Shamsabani Dynasty. His father was also an eminent divine and attended the court of Firozkoh.

According to Stanley Lane-Poole, "Compared with Mahmud, the name of Muhammad Ghorī has remained almost obscure. He was no patron of letters, and no poets or historians vied with one another to praise his munificence and power. Yet his conquests in Hindustan were wider and far more permanent than Mahmud's. A large part of those conquests were of course partial, and there were still revolts to be crushed and chiefs to be subdued: India was not to be subjugated in a generation. But the conquest was real and permanent, and though Muhammad was no Indian sovereign, but still king of Ghazni with eyes turned towards Persia and the Oxus, he left a viceroy in Hindustan who began the famous Slave dynasty, the first of the many Muslim kings that have ruled India.

"Of the two tides of Mohammadan invasion that surged into India, Mahmud's had left little trace. It had been but a series of triumphant raids, and when its violence was spent scarcely enough strength remained to hold a single province. That province however had been held, not without a struggle, and in the Punjab Muhammad Ghorī found the base, the necessary leverage, whence to bear upon a wider territory than his precursor. He rose from even smaller beginnings than Mahmud, but his followers possessed the same hardihood

and power of endurance as the earlier invaders from the same mountain valleys, and they carried their arms further and left sorer footprints. The dynasty of Ghor relapsed into the insignificance of a highland chieftdom after its great Sultan's death, but the dominion it had conquered in India was not lost to Islam. It was consolidated under other rulers, and from the days of Muhammad Ghori to the catastrophe of the Indian mutiny, there was always a Mohammedan king upon the throne of Delhi." (*Medieval India*, pp. 39-40.)

### Minaret at Jam (Firozkoh)

A reference may be made to the recent discovery made by a French Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan of the Ghoriid minaret at Jam, the modern site of Firozkoh. On this monument are inscribed the regal titles of Ghiyasuddin Muhammad b. Sam (1163-1202). This minaret is a brick structure on an octangular base. The tapering circular shaft with the present height of 60 metres is divided into three storeys, each opening on to a balcony resting on corbelled masonry brackets and crowned by a lantern or pavilion. Inside a flight of steps spiralling round a central shaft leads to the upper balcony. The inscriptional bands contain no readable date. However, there is no doubt that it was built for the elder brother of Muizzuddin before 1202 A.D. It does not appear to have been meant as a **Ma'azina**. No remains of any mosque have been traced in the narrow river-bank side.

Both the Jam minaret and the Qutb Minar belong to the same period. However, the former differs from the latter in the material and in exterior decoration. The surface of the Jam minaret is round and decorated with Kufic and Naskh lettering and vineleaf roundels in stucco and blue faience. The Qutb Minar carries out the same idea in red sandstone. Unlike the Jam minaret, Qutb Minar in its final form represented a double function of a **Mazina** and tower of victory.

### Causes of Muslim Success and Rajput Failure

Considering the fact that the Rajputs were great warriors, it seems a little strange that they were defeated by the Muslims. Habibullah admits that in individual fighting, the Rajput surpassed the Turks. The view of Elphinstone, Lane-Poole and V. A. Smith was that the success of the Muslims was due to the fact that they came from cold climate and were non-vegetarians. That view is no longer accepted. The soldierly qualities of the Hindus are admitted even by their enemies and consequently that could not be a factor responsible for their failure. It is also not true that non-vegetarians are better fighters than the vegetarians. Moreover, there were a large number of Hindus who were non-vegetarians at the time when the Hindus and Muslims fought against one another. The real causes must be found somewhere else.

(1) A very important cause of Muslim success and Hindu failure was the **lack of political unity in the country**. There was no one paramount power in the country at that time which could fight against the Muslims. India at that time was a congeries of



states. Various parts of the country were ruled by individual rulers. There were mutual jealousies and dissensions among the Rajput Chiefs. It is true that the Rajputs were good warriors but there was too much of a clanish spirit among them. The Rajput soldiers owed their allegiance to their petty chief and were prepared to fight against other Rajput soldiers under another Rajput Chief. It was in this way that they frittered away their energy. There was no national consciousness among them. The various Rajput princes could not and did not think in terms of India as a whole. They were not prepared to sink their differences in the higher interests of the country and put up a united front against the Muslim invaders. The result was that they were defeated one by one and all their bravery was of no avail.

(2) **The military organization of the Rajputs was defective** and could not succeed against the Muslims. The Rajput armies were ill-organized and ill-equipped. The trouble with the Hindus was that they were satisfied with what they had. They did not try to keep themselves in touch with the latest developments in military organization and methods of fighting. The result was that they were defeated by the Muslims who were ahead of them in these matters. The Indians divided their armies into three parts; the right, centre and the left. They almost invariably made a frontal attack on the enemy. The Muslim armies, on the other hand, were divided into five parts. In addition to the right, centre and left, they had the Advance Guard and the Reserve. The Reserve was always ready to come to the help of any part of the army which was in difficulty or to give the final blow, when the enemy was about to collapse. Moreover, the Hindus put too much reliance on elephants. These "mountain-like elephants" could not stand against the mobile Turkish cavalry. Once the elephants were frightened, they trampled their own men under their feet and thus proved themselves to be a greater liability than an asset. The Rajputs fought mainly with their swords while the Muslims were good archers. The Muslim archers from their horses were more than a match for the Rajputs who fought with their swords.

(3) The Rajputs looked upon a battle as a tournament in which they tried to show skill, bravery and chivalry. That was not the case with their enemies. They did not find themselves fettered by any rules of the game. They believed that all was fair in war. They were prepared to adopt any tactics which could bring them victory. They believed that end justifies the means and they did not care for the consequences of their actions. They were prepared to defile a tank or a river from which their enemies got their water-supply. They were prepared to divert the course of a channel to stop the water-supply to the enemy and thereby bring about their surrender. They were prepared to destroy the whole of the neighbouring territory so that the enemy may be starved to submission. They were always ready to resort to shock-tactics to dishearten and demoralize their enemies. With lightning speed, they fell upon the people and destroyed them with fire and sword.

They did this so often that an impression was created that it was impossible to face the Muslims successfully.

(4) Habibullah points out that one great defect of the Rajput military system was that they staked everything on the issue of a single battle. They did not make any distinction between a battle and a war. Lloyd George used to say that while others won battles, he won the war. Unfortunately, the Rajputs could not think in terms of a defeat. If it was a question of defending a fort, they were prepared to ruin themselves while defending it. If they failed to defend it, they died fighting to a man and their women burnt themselves to death. The result was that after one defeat, nothing was left. It has rightly been said that the Rajputs were notorious for turning a single military defeat in a catastrophe. They should have known that in a war it is sometimes politic to retreat and attack the enemy when the other party is weak.

(5) Another defect in the Rajput military system was that they did not take the offensive against their enemies. To quote Habibullah, "Rarely did the Hindu princes take the offensive, but they bestirred themselves only when the enemy appeared before the stronghold." Obviously, this is not the way of winning victory. A policy of defence alone does not help. A defensive policy has to be coupled with an offensive policy. As that was not done by the Rajputs, their people suffered terribly on account of the Muslim invasions.

(6) Dr. Iswari Prasad maintains that the wars between the Rajputs and the Muslims were "a struggle between two different social systems, the one old and decadent and the other full of youthful vigour and enterprise." The Hindus were divided into many castes. These castes created pride and prejudices. They also created inequality in society. The result was that all the Hindus could not pool their resources against the foreigners. Moreover, out of the four castes the work of fighting was left to only one caste. The people of the three other castes thought that they had nothing to do with the defence of the country and they seemed to be indifferent towards the same. The result was that about three-fourths of the people of India did not fight against the foreigners. Obviously, the rest of the one-fourth of the population could not be expected to fight against the enemy successfully. Islam is a great brotherhood and this equality among the Muslims was a great asset in their fight against the Hindus. Equality among Muslims brought unity among them and they fought shoulder to shoulder against their enemies. It has rightly been said that while the Hindus had no ideology before them to fight for, the Muslims certainly had one. They came to India with the fanatical zeal of crusaders. All their fight against the Hindus was a Jihad. They were convinced that if they won, they would become **Ghazis** and if they died fighting, they would go to **Bahisht**, or paradise and also get the honours of a **Shahid** or martyr. It is these beliefs that "led even the commonest Musalmans to brave risks and cheerfully make sacrifices." It was with this spirit that the Muslim soldiers, with the cries of **Allah-hu-Akbar**, were able to defeat the Rajputs. The cries of **Har Har Mahadeva** of the Hindus were not strong enough to stop the Muslims.

According to P. Saran, "The post-Gupta period in India was marked by the rise and ascendancy of the aristocratic, irrational and exclusive Brahmanism as a result of the reaction which took place against the otherwise democratic and rational but then degenerate Buddhism giving birth to a new ideology in religion which slowly but imperceptibly crept over the social body of Hinduism. This was the ideology of exclusivism, isolation and planned obedience of the monopolists of sacerdotal authority. It was this ideology that rendered the Indian society and its rulers incapable of defending their frontiers and killed its vitality of assimilating the new-comers."

(7) Another cause was the failure on the part of the Hindus to realise the implications of the invasions of the Muslims. Their view was that the Turks were like the Sakas, Kushanas and the Hunas. They believed that the Turks would be contented with extending their control over the Punjab alone and not carry their power into the very heart of India. It was this misunderstanding or wrong conclusion which was responsible for their not taking the Muslim invasions seriously. They ought to have realised the gravity of the situation and marshalled all their resources to meet the enemy. As they did not do so, their failure could be anticipated.

(8) Another cause of the failure of the Hindus was their general attitude towards others and their own lives. Alberuni tells us that "the Indians believe that there is no country but theirs no nation like theirs, no king like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs...They are by nature niggardly in communicating what they know and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste, from among their own people, still more of course from any foreigner." This wrong estimate of themselves blinded the Hindus and they assumed a false sense of superiority which ultimately proved their ruin. Alberuni also tells us that "they (the Hindus) are in a state of confusion, devoid in logical order and in the last instance always mixed up with silly notions of the crowd. I can only compare their mathematical and astronomical knowledge to a mixture of pearls and sour dates, or of pearls and dung, or of costly crystals and common pebbles. Both kinds of things are equal in their eyes since they cannot raise themselves to the methods of a strictly scientific deduction." Such people could not stand against the Muslims who came to India as crusaders for their religion and also hoped to get a lot of money and gold.

(9) Another cause of Muslim success was their slave system. Lane-Poole observes: "While a brilliant father's son is apt to be a failure, the slaves of a real leader of men have often proved the equals of their master." The Muslim rulers had a large number of slaves and they were given high positions on the basis of their merit. The result was that these slaves helped their masters to build up an empire in this country. It is these slaves who were responsible for conquering various parts of this country while their masters were busy otherwise. Examples of such slaves were Qutb-ud-din Aibak and Ikhtiyar-ud din Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khalji.

(10) Critics point out that the blunders of the Indian rulers also

helped the Muslims to win. It is true that Jayapala was defeated by Subuktgin and Mahmud but instead of burning himself on a funeral pyre, he should have gone to fight against the enemies and defeated them. It is no part of bravery to kill oneself if one is defeated by the enemy. Raja Dahir of Sindh also made a similar mistake. He should not have gone to fight as an ordinary soldier in the battle. Like a General, he should have directed the army and not himself become the target of the enemy. The result was that although he was able to establish his reputation as a soldier, he lost the war by allowing himself to be made the target by the enemy. Similar blunders were committed by other Hindu rulers which facilitated the task of conquest of India by the Muslims.

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## CHAPTER VI

# The Slave Dynasty

The dynasty founded by Qutb-ud-din Aibak in India is known as the slave dynasty. However, this description is not accurate. Out of all the kings belonging to the so-called Slave Dynasty, only three, viz., Qutb-ud-din Aibak, Iltutmish and Balban were slaves and even they were manumitted by their masters. Aibak received a letter of manumission from Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Mahmud, the nephew and successor of Muhammad Ghori, before his elevation to the throne of Delhi. Iltutmish was also freed by his master. Balban who belonged to the forty Turkish slaves of Iltutmish, was given freedom by his master. It is also not proper to describe the dynasty as Afghan dynasty or Pathan dynasty as all the rulers of the so-called slave dynasty were neither Afghans nor Pathans but Turks.

Sir Woleseley Haig in Cambridge Shorter History of India says : "The designation of this dynasty will appear to many a contradiction in terms : but in an eastern monarchy, where the sovereign was the heir of all his subjects, who held both life and property at his pleasure, to be the personal slave of the ruler was a distinction rather than a disgrace. The Ghaznavids were sprung from a Turkish slave ; the Mamelukes, at a later period, were the Circassian slaves of Egyptian rulers. Loyal service earned for a slave a regard and esteem sometimes withheld from a son born in the purple, and corrupted from his cradle by flattery and luxury. A favourite slave often received the hand of his master's daughter in marriage : and Muhammad Ghori, when a courtier doled with him on having no son, is said to have replied that in his Turkish slaves he had thousands of sons, who would succeed him and carry on his name." (p. 166).

### **Qutb-ud-din Aibak (1206-10)**

Qutb-ud-din Aibak was the real founder of the Turkish dominion in India. He was born of Turkish parents in Turkestan. When he was merely a boy, he was taken to Nishapur by a merchant where he was purchased by the local Qazi as a slave. The Qazi provided for his religious and military training along with his own sons. When the Qazi died, he was sold by his sons to a merchant who took him to Ghazni where he was purchased by Muhammad Ghori.

## His Rise

Qutb-ud-din Aibak was "endowed with all laudable qualities and admirable impressions" though "he possessed no outward comeliness." He attracted the attention of his new master by his courage, mainly bearing and generosity. He proved himself to be so faithful to his master that he was appointed a commander of a section of the army of his master. He was also appointed Amir-i-Akhur or Master of the Stables. He rendered so valuable services to his master during his Indian expeditions that he was placed in charge of his Indian conquests after the second battle of Tarnai in 1192 A.D. Thus, he was left "untrammelled not only in his administration of the new conquests, but also in his discretion to extend them." Aibak made Indraprastha near Delhi his headquarters.

In order to strengthen his own position, Qutb-ud-din Aibak entered into matrimonial alliances with important personalities. He himself married the daughter of Taj-ud-din Yildoz. He married his sister to Nasir-ud-din Qabacha. To Iltutmish, he married his daughter.

In 1192 A.D., he crushed a rebellion in Ajmer and Meerut. In 1194 A.D., he crushed a second rebellion in Ajmer. In the same year, he helped his master Muhammad Ghori in defeating Jai Chandra, the ruler of Kanauj, in the battle of Chandwara. In 1197 A.D., he punished Bhimdev of Gujarat, plundered his capital and came back to Delhi by way of Hansi. In 1202 A.D., he besieged the fortress of Kalinjar in Bundelkhand and captured the same. He got a lot of booty. Thousands of persons were made prisoners. He marched to the city of Mahoba and took possession of it. Next he occupied Badaun which was one of the richest cities of Hindustan. One of his lieutenants, Ikhtiyar-ud-din, conquered Bihar and a part of Bengal. Thus, before his accession to the throne in 1206 A.D., Qutb-ud-din Aibak was already in possession of almost the whole of northern India as lieutenant of his master and his representative in India.

## Succession

When Muhammad Ghori died in 1206 A.D.,<sup>1</sup> he left no male

1. Dr. Habibullah has described the position in 1206 in these words: "Muizzuddin's sudden death placed his officers in India in difficult situation. The Delhi government was far from well-established; want of common loyalty now threatened to intensify personal jealousies. Aftermaths of the late rising still rendered communications unsafe with Ghazni which, in any case, now seemed an easy prey to the aggressive Khwarizm Shah. By far the most serious menace came from the Hindus whose military power, only stunned by the rapidity of the conquest, now showed signs of recovery and even of offensive action. Already, by 1206, Kalinjar had been recovered and the Chandella King appeared effectively to stop further expansion in the South. In the Gangetic plane, numerous chiefs still held out in open defiance. Gahadavala rule was still a reality, for Harishchandra found means to establish himself in the districts of Farrukhabad and Budaun. Even the Pratiharas appeared to have regained their initiative and recovered Gwalior which had to be reconquered several years later. In the East, a terrible disaster had befallen the Muslim arms and the two-year-old possession of Lakhanuti rendered insecure by distance and by Khalji factiousness, promised to be a heavy liability. The Turks had overrun the whole of North India, but on Muizzuddin's death found themselves in effective possession only of Sind and parts of the Punjab and the Gangetic valley with Rajput resistance increasing in extent." (*The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 87-88).

heir to succeed him. Taj ud din Yildoz, Governor of Kirman, ascended the throne of Ghazni. It seems that it was the desire of Muhammad Ghori that Qutb ud din should succeed him in India. That was probably the reason why Muhammad Ghori formally invested Qutb-ud-din with viceregal powers and conferred upon him the title of Malik. After the death of Ghori, the citizens of Lahore invited Qutb-ud-din to assume sovereign powers. He went to Lahore and took up the reins of government in his hands. However, his formal accession took place on 24th June, 1206.

The rise of Qutb ud-din Aibak aroused the jealousy of Taj-ud-din Yildoz of Ghazni. Aibak charged him with exercising undue influence on Mahmud of Feroz Koh and marched against him. In 1208, he even occupied Ghazni and also won over Sultan Mahmud to his own side. He also secured from him a letter of manumission along with the paraphernalia of royalty or chatter and Durbesh and also authority to rule over Ghazni and Hindustan. However, Aibak was driven out of Ghazni by Yildoz. Aibak came back to Lahore.

So far as Bengal and Bihar were concerned, the death of Ikhtiyar-ud-din Khalji threatened to break the relation of Delhi with Bengal and Bihar. Ali Mardan Khan declared himself independent of Lakhnauti, but the local Khalji Chiefs replaced him by Muhammad Sheran and threw him into prison. However, Ali Mardan Khan managed to escape from jail and went to Delhi. He also persuaded Aibak to intervene into the affairs of Bengal. The Khaljis agreed to recognise Aibak as their overlord. They also agreed to send the annual tribute to Delhi. On account of his being otherwise very busy, Aibak could not follow a policy of aggression against the Rajputs. Aibak died in 1210 on account of injuries received as a result of fall from his horse while playing polo. By some writers, Aibak is not considered to be an independent Sultan of India. We have not come across any coin of Aibak. It is possible that he may not have struck any coin in his name. Ibn-Batuta, the Moorish traveller of the fourteenth century, does not include the name of Aibak in the list of Muslim Sovereigns of India. His name is also not included in the list of Sultans whose names had been ordered to be inserted in the Friday Khutba.

Aibak rendered great services to the cause of Islam in India. For the last two centuries, India was a part of the Ghazni kingdom and the interests of the North-Western India suffered on account of the politics of Ghazni. By making Muslim India independent of Ghazni, Aibak helped considerably in the expansion of power in India. Hasan-un-Nizami observes thus, "By his orders, the precepts of Islam received great promulgation, and the sun of righteousness cast its shadow on the countries of Hind from the heaven of God's assistance." He built one mosque at Delhi and another at Ajmer.

Aibak was a great military leader. He won a large number of victories in battlefields during the lifetime of his master and thereby added to his glory. He rarely lost a battle.

According to Minhaj, Aibak was a "high-spirited and open hearted monarch. He was very generous." "His gifts were best used by hundreds and thousands." No wonder, he has been given the title of **Lakhabakhsh** or giver of lakhs. Hasan-un-Nizami, the author of **Taj-ul-Massir**, tells us that Aibak "dispensed even handed justice to the people and exerted himself to promote the peace and prosperity of the realm." He was a great patron of learning and he patronized writers like Hasan-un-Nizami and Fakhru-d-Din. Hasan-un-Nizami was the author of **Taj ul-Massir** and Fakhru-d-Din was the author of **Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi**.

Aibak was so much busy otherwise that he did not find time to establish a sound system of administration in the country. The whole thing was based on the military. He kept garrisons not only at the capital but also in all important towns of his kingdom. The local administration was left in the hands of the people of the country. Muslim officers were merely put in charge of various departments and most of them were soldiers. The administration of justice must have been crude. It is too much to say that during his reign "wolf and the sheep drank water out of the same pond." It is also not correct to say that Aibak was kind to the Hindus as there is evidence to show that during his wars against Anhilwara and Kalinjar, the Hindus were enslaved and converted and mosques were built on the ruins of the Hindu temples. However, in times of peace Aibak was really tolerant.

Dr. Habibullah gives the following estimate of Aibak: "A military leader of great energy and high merit, he combined the intrepidity of the Turk with the refined taste and generosity of the Persian; extreme liberality earned him the epithet of "Lakh Buksh" (giver of lakhs), while, characteristically enough, his killing is also said to have been by lakhs. Both Hasan Nizami and Fakhre Mudabbir found in him an appreciative patron and dedicated their works to him. On two occasions at least, he interceded with his master for the vanquished Hindu princes. It hardly needs emphasising that to his untiring exertion and devoted service Muizzuddin owed most of his success in India. For he merely supplied the motive power; Aibak was responsible for the detailed planning and initiation of the Delhi state." (**The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India**, p. 91).

### **Aibak as Founder of Delhi Sultanate**

The view of Dr A. L. Srivastava is that Aibak was 'the real founder of Turkish dominion in India' and "the first de facto Sultan of the almost entire Hindustan." The view of Habibullah is that Aibak was responsible for the detailed planning and initiation of the Delhi state. It is pointed out that it is difficult to support the view of Habibullah. The coronation of Aibak took place in 1206 A.D., but his formal manumission, i.e., freedom from slavery, was not obtained by him till 1208 A.D. Ghiyas-ud-Din Mahmud of Ghor is reported to have conferred upon him the royal insignia and the title of Sultan, but his inscriptions show that he never got a title higher than that of Malik or Sipahsalar. It cannot be denied that the right



to issue currency is an essential ingredient of sovereignty but so far not a single gold or silver coin of Aibak has been found. Some of the latest Sultans of Delhi did not accept him as a Sultan. The list of the names of the Sultans of Delhi prepared under the orders of Firuz Shah Tughluq begins with Iluttmish and does not include the name of Aibak. It is pointed out that the character of Muslim rule in India did not change materially during the reign of Aibak. Yalduz as master of Ghazni continued to claim suzerainty over India. It is true that Aibak occupied Ghazni for some time but he was driven out later on. The result was that the question whether the Turkish possessions in northern India were a mere colony of a central Asian empire or a sovereign entity could not be settled. Aibak also was not able to set up a framework of an administrative structure. As a matter of fact, there was not even one capital and Lahore and Delhi were merely two military headquarters.

### **Aram Shah (1210-1211)**

When Qutb-ud-din Aibak died all of a sudden at Lahore, the Amirs and Maliks of Lahore put Aram Shah on the throne "for the sake of restraining tumult, for the tranquillity of the commonalty and content of the hearts of the soldiery." There is a difference of opinion with regard to the relationship of Aram Shah with Qutb-ud-din. It is suggested that he was his son. However, this view is contradicted by the statement of Minhaj-us-Siraj that Qutb-ud-din had only three daughters and no son. Abul Fazal says that Aram Shah was the brother of Qutb-ud-din. A new view has been put forward that Aram Shah was not a relation of Qutb-ud-din but he was put on the throne as he was the man who was available on the spot. No conclusive view can be given on this point.

Unfortunately, Aram Shah was a weak and worthless young-man. No wonder, the people of Delhi refused to accept him as their ruler. Powerful governors of different provinces like Qabacha of Multan and Ali Mardan of Bengal refused to recognise the suzerainty of Aram Shah. There was the danger of a civil war in the country and in order to avoid that, an invitation was sent to Malik Shams ud-din Iluttmish who was the Governor of Badaun at that time. The invitation was accepted and Iluttmish defeated Aram Shah in the plain of Jut near Delhi. Probably, Aram Shah was put to death. His reign lasted for about eight months.

### **Iluttmish (1211-1236)**

Iluttmish was the greatest of the slave kings. He was the slave who rose to eminence by sheer dint of merit. He was a Turk of Ilbari tribe in Turkestan. He belonged to a noble family. As a child, he was very beautiful and showed signs of intelligence and sagacity. He excited the jealousy of his brothers who managed to deprive him of his paternal home and care. He was sold to a merchant of Bukhara and the latter sold him to Qutb-ud-din Aibak. Iluttmish rose step by step till he was made Governor of Badaun. He was also married to the daughter of Qutb-ud-din. He won his spurs in the battle against the Khokhars. In recognition of his service,

Ilutmish, by the orders of Muhammad Ghori, was manumitted and given the rank of Amir-ul-Umara.

When Qutb-ud-din Aibak died in 1210 he was succeeded by Aram Shah. As he was found to be most incompetent, the nobles of Delhi decided to invite Ilutmish to the throne and their choice was in the best interest of the infant empire.

The election of Ilutmish was opposed by the commander of the guards of Qutb-ud-din but his opposition collapsed as there was no serious backing. The jurists headed by Qazi Wajih-ud-din opposed Ilutmish on the ground that he was not a free man. When Ilutmish showed them the letter of manumission, they also kept quiet.

### **Not Usurper**

Ilutmish was not an usurper as there was nothing to usurp. There was no sovereign in India at that time. The sovereign power of Ilutmish was based on three things. In the first place, he was elected by the officials. Secondly, he could claim the right of conquest and the power to enforce. In the third place, he was formally recognized by the Khalifa of Baghdad. It is not clear whether Ilutmish made any special request to the Khalifa for the robe of honour or the Khalifa himself gave the same to him voluntarily. The Khalifa confirmed Ilutmish in the possession "of all the land and sea which he had conquered" as Sultan-i-Azam or Great Sultan. The act "fastened the fiction of Khilafat on the Sultanate of Delhi and involved legally the recognition of the final sovereignty of the Khalifa, and authority outside the geographical limits of India but instead that vague yet nonetheless real brotherhood of Islam." On his coins, Ilutmish described himself as the Lieutenant of the Khalifa.

### **His Difficulties**

When Ilutmish became the ruler in 1211, he had a large number of difficulties to face. Instead of being disheartened by them, he faced them boldly and overcame them all. He took prompt action against Qutbi and Muizzi Maliks and gave them a crushing defeat in the neighbourhood of Delhi. He consolidated his position in the area around Delhi. He also secured a letter of manumission from Yildoz.

### **Yildoz**

Taj-ud-Din Yildoz was a formidable foe of Ilutmish. He considered himself to be the successor of Muhammad Ghori and was not prepared to allow the Muslim empire in India to be independent. In 1214, Yildoz came to Lahore and occupied the same. This was too much for Ilutmish. He marched against Yildoz and defeated him in the battle of Tarain near Thanesar. Yildoz was made a prisoner and sent to the fortress of Badaun where he was later on put to death. It was in this way that Ilutmish was successful in disposing of one of his enemies.

## **Qabacha**

Iltutmish was also successful against Nasir-ud-Din Qabacha who ruled over Uch and Multan. After the death of Qutb-ud-Din, Qabacha had occupied even a portion of the Punjab. As Qabacha refused to recognize Iltutmish as overlord, Iltutmish declared war against him in 1217 and he was successful in driving him out of the Punjab. As the power of Qabacha was not completely crushed, he managed to remain independent for another decade. In 1227, Iltutmish once again marched against him and was successful in capturing Uch without much resistance. Qabacha escaped from Uch and took shelter in Bhakkar. When Bhakkar also was besieged by Iltutmish, Qabacha lost heart and asked for peace. He sent his son Masud Bahram to negotiate the terms but he was imprisoned. Qabacha was so much upset that he tried to escape from Bhakkar but was drowned in the river Indus. One view is that he was killed in an accident. Still another view is that he committed suicide. Whatever the truth, Iltutmish captured Bhakkar and appointed Vizir Muhammad Junaidi to complete the conquest of lower Sindh.

## **Bengal**

After the death of Qutb-ud-Din Aibak, Ali Mardan declared himself independent in Bengal and took up the title of Ala-ud-Din. However, he died after two years. He was succeeded by his son Hisam-ud-Din Iwaz. The latter took up the title of Ghias-ud-Din and struck coins in his own name. Even the Khutba was read in his name. This was too much for Iltutmish to put up with such a defiance. No wonder, he sent an expedition against him in 1225 and himself followed the same. When Ghias-ud-Din heard the approach of Iltutmish, he at once submitted and agreed to pay a huge sum as tribute. The submission of Ghias-ud-Din was not a lasting one and after some time he once again raised the standard of revolt. Another expedition was sent against him. Ghias-ud-Din was defeated and killed and Bengal was completely brought under the throne of Delhi. When Nasir-ud-din who had conquered Bengal died in 1229, the Khalji Maliks revolted in Bengal under Balka. Iltutmish himself went to Bengal at the head of the army and defeated Balka and put Ala-ud-Din Jani in charge of Bengal.

## **The Rajputs**

After the death of Aibak, the Rajputs did their best to drive away the Turks. The Chandelas recovered Kalinjar and Ajaigarh. The Pratiharas drove away the Muslim garrisons from Gwalior and reoccupied the city. They also occupied Narwar and Jhansi. The Chauhan ruler of Ranthambhor turned out the Turkish troops and brought under his control Jodhpur and the adjacent areas. The Chauhans of Jalor conquered once again Nadol, Mandor, Bharmer, Ratnapur, Sanchor, Radhadhara, Khera, Ramasin and Bhinamal. Jaden Bhattis established their sovereignty in Northern Alwar, Ajmer, Bayana and Thangir put an end to Turkish supremacy and became independent.

Iltutmish could not be expected to allow the Rajputs to remain

independent for long. In 1226, he besieged Ranthambhor, captured it and regarrisoned it. Mandor, capital of the Parmara Rajputs, was also captured and regarrisoned. Next he besieged Jalor. Udai Singh, its ruler, offered stiff resistance. Ultimately, he was made to surrender. However, he was allowed to continue as ruler on the condition of his payment of tribute. Bayana and Thangir were also recaptured. Ajmer was captured after stiff resistance. Nagair in Jodhpur was recovered. In 1231, Gwalior was besieged. Malavavarma Deva, its ruler, fought bravely but ultimately surrendered. Trilokyavarma, the ruler of Kalinjar, abandoned Kalinjar and the same was plundered. However, the Chandelas were able to turn out the Muslims once again. Iltutmish led the attack on Nagada in person. However, he was defeated by Ksetra Singh, its ruler, and Iltutmish suffered heavy losses. Iltutmish tried to subdue the Chalukyas of Gujarat but he was unsuccessful. In 1234-35, Iltutmish led an expedition to Malwa. He plundered Bhilsa and Ujjain. He also destroyed the temple of Mahakal at Ujjain. The contention of Sir Wolseley Haig is that Iltutmish conquered and annexed Malwa but it appears that it was merely a raid and not a war of conquest.

### **The Doab**

Banaun, Kanauj, Banaras, and Katehar (Rohilkhand) etc., asserted their independence in the time of Iltutmish. However, as soon as Iltutmish was able to re-establish his authority, he took action against them. One by one, Badaun, Kanauj and Banaras were recaptured. The same was the case with Katehar. An expedition was sent to Bahraich and the same was captured. Avadh was also brought under Delhi after stiff resistance. It was found difficult to defeat a local tribe which was fighting under their chief named Bartu or Pirthu. The Turks were defeated by them on many occasions and more than a lakh of the troops were destroyed by them. It was only after the death of Pirthu that the local tribes were subdued. Expeditions were also sent against Chandwara and Tirhut.

### **The Mongols**

In the year 1221, the Mongols appeared for the first time on the banks of the river Indus under their famous leader Changiz Khan who had overrun the countries of Central and Western Asia with lightning rapidity. When he attacked Jalal-ud-Din Mangabarni, the last Shah of Khwarizm of Khiva, the latter fled to the Punjab. He asked Iltutmish to give him shelter. Iltutmish felt that by helping Jalal-ud-Din he would be inviting trouble from Changiz Khan. Consequently he wrote back saying that although he had no objection to giving him shelter, he was afraid that the climate of the Punjab would not suit him. This was a very polite way of refusing the request. The result was that Jalal-ud-Din entered into an alliance with the Khokhars. He defeated Nasir-ud-Din Qabacha of Multan and plundered Sindh and Northern Gujarat. After that he went away to Persia. The Mongols also retired. Thus, the infant Muslim empire in India was saved.



The last expedition of Iltutmish was directed against Banian. According to Raverty, this was situated in hill tracts of the Sindh-Sagar Doab or in the country immediately west of the Salt Range. Iltutmish was attacked on the way by such a severe illness that he had to be carried back to Delhi in a litter. The disease of Iltutmish proved fatal and he died on 29th April, 1236.

The famous Qutb Minar near Mehrauli near Delhi was got completed by Iltutmish in the year 1231-1232. It stands as a testimony to the greatness of Iltutmish. The Qutb Minar was not named after Qutb-ud-Din Aibak but after Khwaja Qutb-ud-Din—a native of Uch near Baghdad who had come to live in Hindustan and was held in great esteem by Iltutmish and others. Out of gratitude, Iltutmish got the names of his patrons, Qutb-ud-Din Aibak and Sultan Muiz-ud-Din, inscribed on it. A magnificent mosque was also built by the orders of the Sultan.

The reign of Iltutmish saw the decline of Lahore and the rise of Delhi. Delhi gradually became the greatest centre of learning and culture in the East. Great scholars like Nur-ud-Din, Mohammad Afi, Minhaj-us-Siraj and Hasan Nizami were assembled in his court. Likewise, many saints, artists and artisans also flocked to Delhi. The result was that Delhi became "second Baghdad."

The Delhi Sultanate owes the outlines of its administrative system to Iltutmish. He organised the Revenue and Finance Departments. This was a task which had not been attempted by any other Muslim ruler in India before him. An administrative structure could not be built without the support of the Turkish nobility and that could be done either by fear or through favour. The first was out of the question as the Muslim State in India was in its infancy and there was also the danger of Mongol invasions and opposition from the Hindus. No wonder, Iltutmish tackled the problem in a spirit of reconciliation and compromise.

He divided the Empire into several Iqtas which were assigned to various nobles. Every Iqtadar had to maintain law and order and collect revenue. After deducting his salary and the expenses of the Government, he sent the surplus revenue to the Central Government. The Iqtadari system differed from the feudal system of Europe. The Iqtadars were not the owners of the land allotted to them. They were mere functionaries. They could be transferred from one assignment to another and could even be deprived of their Iqtas at the sweet-will of the Emperor. It is true that the Iqtadari system was not an ideal one but it suited the needs of the moment. The system also satisfied the vanity of the nobles and they could be prevented from frittering away their energy in mutual fights or in opposing the Emperor. In order to check the tendency on the part of the nobles to become too powerful, Iltutmish set up an official nobility of slaves known as the Chahalgani or the corps of Forty. As the members of the Chahalgani were the personal slaves of the Emperor, the latter could depend on their loyalty and allegiance and through them could keep a grip over the affairs of the Government. It cannot be denied that by establishing peace and

by curbing the centrifugal forces, Iltutmish created a sort of political unity and a centralised government which guaranteed protection to the people both from foreign invasion and internal disturbances.

Iltutmish inscribed upon his coins the proud legend "The Mighty Sultan, Sur of the Empire and the Faith. Conquest-laden Iltutmish" and "Aid of the Commander of the Faithful." Before Iltutmish, the Muslim rulers issued small bullion coins of the native form and inscribed their names sometimes in Nagari script and sometimes in Arabic. Those coins also bore symbols familiar to the Hindus, such as the bull of Shiva and the horseman. Iltutmish was the first who introduced a purely Arabic coinage. He adopted as his standard coin the silver tanka, the ancestor of the rupee, weighing 175 grains. Gold tankas of the same weight were introduced later on by Balban.

Iltutmish was a pious Muslim. He was very particular about his five daily prayers. However, he was intolerant towards the Shias. No wonder, the Ismail-Shias revolted against him but their revolt was crushed. A large number of them were put to death. His treatment of the Hindus was also not enlightened. He continued to persecute them. Iltutmish cannot be described as a constructive statesman. However, through his courage and bravery, he was able to save the infant Muslim empire in India. He continued the work started by Qutb-ud-Din Aibak.

### Estimate

As regards an estimate of Iltutmish, Sir Wolseley Haig was of the opinion that Iltutmish was the greatest of all the slave kings. "His achievements were hardly equal to that of his master but he never had, as Aibak had, the moral and material support of a great empire. What he accomplished, he accomplished by himself, often in the face of great difficulties, and he added to the dominions of Aibak, which he found dismembered and disorganized, the provinces of Sind and Malwa. That he was even more profuse than his master is little to his credit, for the useless and mischievous prodigality of eastern rulers is more often the fruit of vanity than of any finer feeling, and at a court at which a neat epigram or a smart repartee is almost as profitable as a successful campaign, the resources of a country are wasted on worthless objects." (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 56.)

The same writer in *Cambridge Shorter History of India* says: "Iltutmish was the greatest of the Slave Kings. To the dominions of Aibak he added Lower Sindh and part of Malwa, besides restoring and maintaining order in the loose congeries of fiefs of which those dominions were composed. He was a builder as well as a conqueror and an administrator, and left monuments both at Delhi and Ajmer displaying his taste in architecture." (P. 167).

Dr. Habibullah observes: "His was a remarkably successful reign. He took up Aibak's unfinished work and against heavy odds and on imperfect foundations, built up a state whose sovereignty



uprooted more powerful and far older empires. His firm and energetic action unified the kingdom and saved it from initial dismemberment. Against the Rajputs his forward policy achieved great success and yielded results of great moral value; it constituted an effective answer to the first challenge directed by the Hindus against the newly established Muslim state. Beyond recovering Muizzuddin's conquests he made appreciable advance into Rajputana and the trans-Gangetic tracts and also towards reorganising the Indus valley frontier. A calculating and skilful organiser, to him the Sultanate owed the first outline of its administrative system. He laid foundations of an absolute monarchy that was to serve later as the instrument of a military imperialism under the Khaljis. By a clever compromise with religious leaders, he disarmed moral opposition, while the military class found profit and occupation in his expansionist schemes. Not merely his crown and his dynasty, but also the State obtained its final sanction, and his ambition its crowning fulfilment, when on the 22nd Rabi, I, 626/19th February, 1229, emissaries from the Abbaside Caliph arrived from Baghdad to invest him with the powers of an Islamic king. Aibak's objective was at last achieved and the Delhi State thus became a full legal entity. To describe Iltutmish as great would no doubt be an overstatement but he was an unusually able ruler who left his mark on every aspect of the Sultanate's activity. Even long after he was gone and his dynasty supplanted, people fondly looked back to his 'prosperous and glorious reign'. Aibak outlined the Delhi Sultanate and its sovereign status; Iltutmish was unquestionably its king." (*The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp. 104-105.)

According to Minhaj-us-Siraj, "Never has a sovereign virtuous, kind-hearted and reverent towards the learned and the divines, sat upon the throne." Iltutmish is also described in some contemporaries' descriptions as "a protector of the lands of God" and "the helper of the servants of God." It is pointed out that the court of Iltutmish became an asylum for great poets and scholars from various parts of Asia. Minhaj-us-Siraj, the author of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, was patronized by Iltutmish. The same was the case with poets Ruhani and Malik Taj-ud-Din Rezab. Awfi wrote *Jawami-ul-Hikayat* during his reign.

### **Rukn-ud-Din Firuz Shah (1236)**

Iltutmish had many sons but as all of them were incompetent, he appointed his daughter Raziah as his successor. Objections were raised to his choice and the reply of Iltutmish was: "My sons are devoted to the pleasures of youth, and no one of them is qualified to be a king. They are unfit to rule the country and after my death you will find that there is no one more competent to guide the state than my daughter."

In spite of this, when Iltutmish died, the nobles of the court who considered themselves to be too proud to bow their heads before a woman, put on the throne Rukn-ud-Din Firuz Shah who was the



eldest son of Ilutmish. Before becoming king, Rukn ud-Din had been in charge of government of Badaun and Lahore.

Experience showed that Rukn-ud-Din was an utterly worthless fellow. He spent most of his time in the satisfaction of his sexual thirst and neglected altogether the work of the government. He took pleasure in riding through the streets of Delhi on an elephant and scattering gold among the people. Buffoons and fiddlers were his companions. He has rightly been called a pleasure-loving fellow.

Rukn-ud-Din left the work of the government in the hands of his ambitious mother, Shah Turkan. She was originally a Turkish handmaid. She had her revenge on all those who had offended her in her youth. Some of them were degraded and some were put to death. Qutb-ud-Din, a son of Ilutmish, was got murdered. The result of all this was that rebellions occurred on all sides. The Governors of Multan, Hansi, Badaun and Lahore refused to acknowledge the authority of Rukn-ud-Din. It is true that the young king marched against them<sup>1</sup> but he felt that he was deserted by his Wazir Muhammad Junaidi. A conspiracy was hatched to murder Raziya but the same leaked out. All the Muslim nobles were disgusted and no wonder they put Shah Turkan to death. When Rukn came to the help of his mother, he too was defeated and put to death. The reign of Rukn-ud-Din lasted for six months and seven days.

### **Sultana Raziya (1236-1240)**

After the death of Rukn-ud-Din Firuz Shah, Sultana Raziya was put on the throne. Dr. R.P. Tripathi points out that considering "the time and general outlook of the Muslim people, chiefly of the military and religious classes, the selection of Raziya was unique and most daring. Although her reign lasted for three years and a half, yet its significance cannot be measured by them. At least it indicates the freshness and robustness of the Turkish mind in the thirteenth century, which then seemed to be capable of taking of such a bold step and trying such an experiment. It was left to only one solitary jurist to observe, some three centuries afterwards, that the selection of Raziya was most curious, and to express his surprise at the action of contemporary jurists and Shaikhs who confirmed it. He explains it away by suggesting that it must have been due to the united support and power of the maliks." (*Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 29).

Raziya had remarkable talents. According to Minhaj-us-Siraj, she was a great sovereign, sagacious, just, beneficent, the patron of the

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1. Dr. Habibullah points out that taking advantage of the absence of her brother, Raziya cleverly exploited the general discontent against the rule of Shah Turkan. Clad in a red garment customary for the aggrieved, Raziya showed herself to the people assembled for the Friday prayers and in the name of her father appealed for help against the intrigues of Shah Turkan. This had a profound effect on the people. Isami tells us that Raziya even entered into an agreement with the people to the following effect: "She was to be given a chance to prove her abilities and if she did not prove better than men, her head was to be struck off." The army officers lent their weight to the action and by the time her brother came back in the city, Raziya's enthronement was complete and Shah Turkan had been thrown into prison.

learned, a dispenser of justice, the cherisher of her subjects, and of warlike talent, and was endowed with all the admirable attributes and qualifications necessary for kings. She marched in person against her enemies. She put aside her dress as a woman. She gave up veil and "donned the tunic and assumed the head dress of a man." She conducted the affairs of the state with considerable ability in open Darbar. She tried to "play the king" in all possible ways. In spite of all this, her rule ended after a brief period of three years and a half for the simple reason that she was a woman.

The throne which was ascended by Sultana Raziya was not a bed of roses. The Governors of Multan, Badaun, Hansi and Lahore openly revolted against her. Wazir Muhammad Junaidi and some other nobles refused to reconcile themselves to have a woman as their ruler. For some time, by intrigues and diplomacy, Raziya was able to create dissensions among the rebel Governors and nobles. Wazir Junaidi was defeated and he retired and died. She was also able to win over some of Muslim nobles to her side.

During her reign, some unorthodox sects among the Muslims raised the standard of revolt. They were led by Nur-ud-Din. They entered the Jama Masjid of Delhi and tried to harass the orthodox people by performing their own prayers. Raziya took no time in sending a force against them. They were crushed and order was restored in the capital.

It is contended that if Raziya had not been a woman, she would have been a most successful ruler in India. Her great weakness was her sex. Elphinstone points out that even "her talents and virtues were insufficient to protect her from (this) single weakness." She began to show undue favours to Jamal-ud Din Yaqut, an Abyssinian slave, who was raised to the post of the master of stables. Ibn Batuta says that her fondness for the Abyssinian was criminal. However, no such allegation has been made by Minhaj-us-Siraj, the contemporary writer. He simply says that the Abyssinian "acquired favour in attendance upon the Sultana." The only allegation made against Raziya by Ferishta is that "a very great degree of familiarity was observed to exist between the Abyssinian and the Queen, so much so that when she rode he always lifted her on horse by raising her up under the arms." According to Thomas, "It was not that a virgin Queen was forbidden to love. She might have indulged herself in submissive Prince Consort or revelled almost unchecked in the dark recesses of the palace harem, but wayward fancy pointed in a wrong direction, and led her to prefer a person employed about her court ...the Turki nobles resented with one accord." (**Chronicles of the Pathan Kings**, p. 106.) However, this view is not accepted by Major Raverty who contends that the attack of Thomas was without a just cause.

The nobles became jealous of Yaqut and turned against Raziya. There were simultaneous revolts in the various parts of the kingdom. The Governor of Lahore was the first to create trouble but he was defeated by Raziya. There was a serious rebellion in Bhatinda. Malik Ikhtiar-ud-Din Altunia, Governor of Bhatinda, refused to



and ultimately the capture of the city. The invaders had already laid waste to the surrounding country. And, the Sultan got acquainted with the fact that the Mongols did not like the idea of entering India. As a result sent by Balban, Shah Wali Khan of Multan, but he was captured by the Mongols. Governor of Lahore, after the fall of the city for some time had feeling his position becoming untenable, fled the city. The city was captured and plundered. The residents of Lahore were massacred and after that the Mongols retired.

### **Alau-ud-Din Masud Shah (1242-1246)**

Masud Shah ruled for four years. He was the grandson of Balban and the son of Rukn-ud-Din Feroz Shah. During his reign the Turkish nobles were supreme. The new Sultan was forced to concede all powers to the Forty. He was merely to give the title of the Sultan. The job of the Nizami-Mahmat was created once again and that office was filled up by Malik Qutub-ud-Din Husam. The other important positions in the administration were occupied by the other members of the Forty. Mubarak-ud-Din, the Wazir, continued the same position as was formerly occupied by the Nizami. Differences arose between the aristocracy and the Wazir and ultimately the Wazir was dismissed. Balban was appointed Amir-i-Hush. Gradually, he was able to concentrate practically all power in his own hands.

It was during the reign of Masud Shah that Tughlar Khan, Governor of Bengal, defied the authority of the Sultan and became independent. He also annexed Bihar. He went to the extent of invading Awadh. Multan and Uch also became independent. In 1245, Multan was invaded and occupied by Saif-ud-Din Hasan Qarlugh. In 1248, the Mongols appeared in India. They invaded Multan and drove out Hasan Qarlugh. After that they laid siege to Uch. Sultan Mahmud advanced against the Mongols as far as the Beas and on hearing the advance of the king, the Mongols raised siege and left India.

A conspiracy was hatched in which Balban, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud and his mother participated. Nasir-ud-din Mahmud allowed himself to be hurried to the capital disguised as a sick man and then veiled as a woman. Masud Shah was deposed and Nasir-ud-din Mahmud became king in June, 1246.

### **Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud (1246-1266)**

Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud owed his throne to the Turkish aristocracy and the latter was bound to have tremendous influence in the administration. The new Sultan also knew the face of those who opposed the powerful aristocracy. It is contended that Nasir-ud-Din resigned all powers into the hands of Turkish aristocracy, particularly Balban, and merely continued to reign only in name for about twenty years. It is also pointed out that he lived a very simple life, spending most of his time in copying the Holy Quran. He was so simple that he did not allow his wife to have a maid servant. It is stated that on one occasion the fingers of his wife were burnt



while cooking and she requested the Sultan to provide a maid-servant for her. The reply of the Sultan was that as he was merely a trustee of the State, he could not spend money on his personal comforts. This story is obviously incorrect as the wife of the Sultan was the daughter of Balban and it was too much to expect from such a lady that she would cook food herself. Moreover, it is also known that Nasir-ud-Din had more than one wife and very many slaves.

Dr. P. Saran differs from the view of other writers with regard to the character of Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud. He points out that the young Sultan began his reign with great enthusiasm but that was not palatable to Balban who wanted to keep all the powers in his own hands. The young Sultan was far-sighted and waited for an appropriate opportunity to challenge Balban. A time came when Balban became unpopular with the Turkish nobility, including his relatives and the Sultan took advantage of this opportunity and expelled Balban and brought in Imad-ud-Din, Raihan. During the brief period of the supremacy of Raihan, the young Sultan was actually the ruler. When Balban became strong once again and Raihan was ousted, the Sultan had no hesitation in doing what he was ordered to do by Balban. On the bidding of Balban, Nasir-ud-Din banished **Malika-i-Jahan**, his own mother. The Sultan cared more for his own safety than for the life of his mother. Dr. P. Saran also points out that when Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud became king, he was only a lad of seventeen and could not be expected to become a recluse at that age. There is nothing to show that the Sultan had no interest in worldly affairs. On the other hand, the Sultan positively showed great energy and skill in waging holy wars against the infidels. Mahmud is said to have led seven campaigns into the neighbouring territories. It is pointed out that despite his much proclaimed religiosity, the Sultan was as ambitious to enjoy worldly power and comforts as any virulent and materialist monarch. The way he took part in the conspiracy to depose Masud Shah also shows his true character.

The Mongols created trouble during the reign of Nasir-ud-Din. They made several raids upon Multan and Lahore and extorted a lot of booty in gold, silk and other valuables from the citizens. They also carried away a large number of people as captives from those cities. In November 1246, the Sultan crossed the river Ravi and advanced to the banks of the Chenab. He sent Balban to the Jud hills and the Salt Range to punish the Khokhars. Balban dealt with them effectively. When Balban was encamped on the banks of the river Jhelum, a Mongol force made its appearance. However, it retired when they found that Balban was ready to meet them. It was in this way that the danger from the Mongols was met during the reign of Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud.

Kishlu Khan was the brother of Balban. He had been appointed the Governor of Multan and Uch by Raihan. When Balban was restored, Kishlu Khan revolted and accepted the suzerainty of Hulagu Khan of Khorasan. Thus, Multan became a part of the

Mongol dominions. In 1256, Qutlugh Khan, Amir of Bayana, moved into the Punjab upto the bank of the Beas and joined the army of Kishlu Khan. The combined forces marched upon the fort of Samanah. It is true that the rebels were defeated by Balban but that led to an increase in bitterness. After a few months, the Mongol army under Nuyin Salin invaded the southern frontier, and it was joined by Kishlu Khan from Uch. They destroyed the defences of Multan. There was a lot of terror among the people. Balban made preparations against the Mongols but as they had come merely to plunder, they retired from the country.

It is not known with certainty how the reign of Mahmud ended. The reason is that Minhaj died before the event and the account of Barani opens with the accession of Balban. The accounts of Ibn Batuta and Isami hold Balban guilty of poisoning his master. However, it is difficult to believe that story. The reason is that Balban had very close relations with the royal family. Both Masud and Mahmud were his sons-in-law. His son Bughra Khan was married to the only daughter of Mahmud by a second wife. The line of Iltutmish was thus almost merged in his person. Mahmud is not known to have left any male issue. Even as the **Naib**, Balban used to have the insignia of royalty. There was no opposition to his accession to the throne and it is too much to believe that he poisoned his master.

Dr. Habibullah says: "For nearly twenty years Mahmud reigned but he never ruled. His piety and simplicity may have been overstressed but of his unassertive nature and weak resolution there can be little doubt. His excessive modesty ill-served the king of a conquerring race, for a strong will was an essential pre-requisite for Iltutmish's representative. The king's lack of vigour threatened to destroy respect for the crown. A change on the throne became necessary even in his own lifetime but Mahmud escaped his brothers' fate because of the loyal and devoted service of the **naib**, Bahauddin Balban, the Ulugh Khan." (*The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 160.)

### **Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban (1266-86) : Early life**

Balban was the greatest of the slave kings. His original name was Baha-ud-Din. He was a Ilbari Turk. When he was young, he was captured by the Mongols and carried to Ghazni and sold to Khawaja Jamal-ud-Din of Basra, a man of piety and learning. The latter brought him to Delhi in 1232 A.D. along with other slaves and all of them were purchased by Iltutmish. Balban belonged to the famous band of Turkish slaves of Iltutmish known as "The Forty (Chahelgan)". By his efforts, he became the Amir-i-Shikar or Lord of the Hunt in the reign of Raziya. He was given the jagir of Rewari in the Punjab by Bahram Shah. He was also given the district of Hansi. In 1246, he forced the Mongols to raise the siege of Uch. He was instrumental in overthrowing Masad Shah and putting Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud on the throne of Delhi. The result was that Nasir-ud-Din placed all power in his hands. Kishlu Khan, the

younger brother of Balban, was appointed Amir-i-Hajib or Lord Chamberlain. Sher Khan, his cousin, was appointed the Governor of Lahore and Bhatinda. In 1249, Balban was appointed Naib-i-Mamlakat. In the same year, he married his daughter to Sultan Nasir-ud-Din. It was in this way that all power came into the hands of Balban.

In 1253, there was a temporary eclipse in the power of Balban. There were many Turkish nobles who hated Balban as he had monopolized all power. Imad-ud-Din Raihan put himself at the head of all those who were opposed to Balban. The Sultan also joined them. The result was that in 1253 Balban and his brother were dismissed. Raihan became Prime Minister. This Raihan has been described as a renegade Hindu, vile upstart, usurper and a conspirator. The truth is that he was nothing of the kind. He was as good a Muslim as any Turk. He was neither a ruffian nor a scoundrel. However, he was a clever politician who took advantage of the dissatisfaction amongst the nobles and the Sultan and managed to usurp power. Raihan was not able to remain in power for long. The Turkish nobles joined hands once again with Balban and in 1254, Raihan was dismissed and Balban was reappointed as Naib.

After his restoration, Balban continued the policy of consolidating his authority. Tughan Khan, the Governor of Bengal, had repudiated the authority of Delhi and even invaded Avadh. However, Tughan Khan requested Balban to help him when he was defeated by the Raja of Jaj Nagar in Orissa. Tamur Khan was sent by Balban with instructions to take charge of Bengal itself and the same was done by him successfully. Tughan Khan was compensated otherwise but he died soon after. Bengal gave trouble to Balban once again. One of the successors of Tughan Khan took up royal title, struck coins and got the Khutba read in his own name in about 1225. However, he died in 1257 and the rule of Delhi was established in Bengal. There was trouble once again when Arslan Khan, Governor of Kara, occupied Lakhnauti and ruled Bengal as an independent ruler and this state of affairs continued till the end of the reign of Nasir-ud-Din.

Balban also took steps to crush the Hindus of the Doab. There was bitter fighting and a large number of the Hindus were slaughtered and their women and children were made slaves. Balban also punished the people of Mewat with his usual brutality. Ranthambhor was captured after many expeditions. In 1247, Balban suppressed a rising of the Chandela Chief of Kalinjar. In 1251, he led an expedition against the ruler of Gwalior.

### **Balban as King**

When Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud died in 1266, Balban himself became the Sultan. At the time of his accession to the throne, he had to meet many difficulties. The affairs of the state had fallen into confusion on account of the incompetence of the successors of Iltutmish. The royal treasury was practically empty. The prestige of the state had sunk low. The arrogance of the Turkish



nobles had increased. To quote Barani, "Fear of the governing power, which is the basis of all good government, and the sources of the glory and splendour of the state, had departed from the hearts of all men and the country had fallen into a wretched condition." The Delhi Sultan was also exposed to Mongol raids. Balban proved himself to be more than an equal for the emergency.

### **The Doab**

After creating a strong and efficient army, he decided to restore order in the Doab and the neighbourhood of Delhi. On account of the predatory raids of the Rajputs of Mewat and different robber bands, life, property and commerce had become unsafe. The officers of the Sultan found it difficult to collect revenue. Soon after his accession, Balban was able to clear the neighbourhood of Delhi from robbers and rebels who were punished with a heavy hand. The jungles were cleared. He personally took part in the operations against the rebels in the Doab and Avadh. They were ruthlessly driven away. Military posts were set up at Bhojpur, Patiali, Kampil and Jalali and ferocious Afghan troops were put in them. In Katehar (Rohilkhand), Balban ordered his troops to attack the villages. The houses of the people were burnt and orders were passed to kill the whole of the adult male population. Women and children were made slaves. In every village and jungle, there were heaps of human corpses. The terror created was so great that the peoples of Katehar did not dare to raise their heads once again for a long time.

### **Bengal**

Tughril Khan was the deputy of Balban in Bengal. He was an active, courageous and generous Turk and his administration was efficient. The old age of Balban and the Mongol invasion encouraged Tughril Khan to declare his independence. Balban was upset when he heard the news of the revolt of Tughril Khan. He sent a large army to Bengal under Alptgin entitled Amir Khan. However, Amir Khan was defeated and his troops went over to the side of Tughril Khan. Balban was so much annoyed that he ordered Amir Khan to be hanged over the gate of Delhi. In 1280, another army was sent to Bengal under Malik Targhi. This expedition was also unsuccessful. Balban "now devoted all his attention and energy to effect the defeat of Tughril" and decided to go to Bengal personally. He took his son Bughra Khan to Bengal. When Tughril Khan heard of the approach of Balban, he left Lakhnauti and fled into the jungles of Jainagar. Balban advanced into Eastern Bengal in pursuit of Tughril Khan and his followers. They were incidentally discovered by Sher Andaz, a follower of Balban. Malik Muqaddir brought Tughril Khan down with an arrow shot. His head was cut off and his body was thrown into the river. His relatives and most of his troops were captured. Balban inflicted exemplary punishments on the relatives and followers of Tughril Khan. Barani tells us that "on either side of the principal bazar (of Lakhnauti), in a street more than two miles in length, a row of stakes was set up and the adherents of Tughril



were impaled upon them. None of the beholders had ever seen a spectacle so terrible and many swooned with terror and disgust." The Sultan appointed Bughra Khan as Governor of Bengal. Before leaving, Balban addressed Bughra Khan as in these words: "Understand me and forget not that if the Governors of Hind or Sindh, or Malwa or Gujarat, Lakhnauti or Sonargaon, shall draw the sword and become rebels to the throne of Delhi, then such punishment, as has fallen on Tughril and his dependents, will fall upon them, their wives and children, and all their adherents." Bughra Khan and his descendants continued to rule in Bengal up to 1339 A.D.

### **The Mongols**

The menace of the Mongols became very great during the time of Balban. Their raids became frequent. Balban always kept himself in readiness to meet the danger on the frontiers. He made it a point never to go very far from Delhi. He was not satisfied with the negative policy of defence and consequently followed an aggressive policy of subjugating or crushing the Khokhars and other tribes which had never ceased to plunder and ravage the frontier districts of the Delhi Sultanate. His plan was to bring their territory under the Delhi Sultanate so as to deprive the invaders of the advantage of a safe passage through the tribal country. Balban led an attack on the Salt Range and chastised the Khokhars. However, he failed to establish a permanent foothold on the land. He also failed to win over the friendship of the Khokhars.

Balban adopted other measures for the defence of the Western frontier. He maintained forts on the routes of the invaders in perfect preparedness. Those forts were fully garrisoned and equipped. He built new forts or watch-posts wherever necessary. He kept a vigilant watch on the routes. He appointed as wardens of the marches tried and experienced military officers such as Sher Khan Sangar. The latter was a very distinguished warrior of that period. He had been the Governor of Bhatinda, Bhatnir, Sunam and Samana. His presence on the frontier was a guarantee of security. Both the Mongols and the Khokhars dreaded him. Unfortunately Balban became jealous of him and brought about his death by poison.

The result of the death of Sher Khan Sangar was that the Mongols, Khokhars and other tribes once again started their raids in 1271. Balban put Timur Khan in charge of Sunam and Samana. The other Amirs were put in charge of the other Iqtas and forts. The arrangements did not succeed. It was under these circumstances that Balban put his son Muhammad in charge of the southern frontier. Muhammad made Multan as his headquarters. The Mongols invaded again in 1279 and 1285. These invasions were so great that they strained all the might and resources of the Sultan. The Mongols were defeated and driven away. In 1286, the Mongols reappeared and this time Prince Muhammad was killed. Poet Amir Khusru was also captured. It is true that Balban re-occupied Lahore but his authority did not extend beyond that. The whole of the region beyond the river Ravi continued to be under the control of the Mongols.

## Death

It is to be noted that Balban did not live long after the death of his son, Muhammad, in 1286 at the hands of the Mongols. The shock was so great that the Sultan never recovered from it. When Balban found his end coming near, he called his son Bughra Khan from Bengal to stay with him but he was so afraid of the stern nature of his father that he slipped away to Bengal. The result was that Balban appointed Kai-Khusrau, the son of Muhammad, as his heir and died soon after in 1286. Barani tells us that "the maliks in grief at Balban's death tore their garments and threw dust on their heads as they followed, bare-feet, the king's bier to the burial ground at Darul Aman. For forty days, they mourned his death, and slept on the bare floor."

## Destruction of "The Forty"

Balban was responsible for the destruction of "The Forty". He knew full well that "The Forty" would never allow him to exercise all the powers of Sultan. He had not forgotten that they had reduced the Sultan to the position of a figure-head by usurping all his powers. Balban promoted junior Turks to important positions and put them on a position of equality with "The Forty". Whenever any member of "The Forty" made any mistake, he was severely punished. It is stated that when Malik Baqbaq, Governor of Badaun, caused his servant to be beaten to death, Balban ordered Baqbaq to be publicly flogged. Haibat Khan was the Governor of Avadh. He was found guilty of killing a man while drunk with wine. Balban ordered him to be flogged with 500 stripes and he was handed over to the widow of victim. Haibat Khan had to pay 20,000 Tankas to the widow and he never left his house after that till his death. Balban got Amin Khan, Governor of Avadh, hanged at the gate of the city of Ayodhya. Sher Khan Sanqar was got poisoned. Balban was jealous of him. The result was that Balban was able to destroy "The Forty". Those nobles who escaped death or dismissal, became submissive on account of terror.

## Spy System

Balban organised a very efficient system of espionage. Secret reporters were put in every department. Secret news-writers were stationed in every Province and in every district. The news-writers were given good salaries and kept independent of the Governors and the Commanders and they were required to send correct news unmindful of the person involved. They were severely punished if they failed in their duty. It is stated that the news-writer of Badaun did not report the conduct of Malik Baqbaq and consequently he was hanged over the city gate. It was with the help of this spy system that Balban was able to strengthen his position.

## Cancellation of Grants

Balban reorganized his army and made it an efficient instrument. In the time of Ilutush, some land had been granted on condition of military service. The grantees continued to enjoy those lands

although some of them were dead and others had become old. Their descendants had "taken possession of the grants as an inheritance from their fathers and had caused their names to be recorded in records of the Ariz (Muster-master)." There was a general tendency on their part to evade service in the field. Balban resumed the old grants but allotted subsistence allowances to the grantees according to their age. There was a lot of discontentment and ultimately Balban cancelled the orders for the resumption of lands. The result was that the abuse continued.

### Army

Balban put Imad-ud-Mulk in charge of the army. He was appointed Diwan-i-Ariz or Army Minister. He was very competent officer. He was made independent of the Minister of Finance. He took keen interest in matters relating to recruitment, salaries and equipments of the troops. The result was that strict discipline was enforced in the army which became really efficient.

### Conception of Kingship

Balban's conception of kingship was similar to that of the theory of divine right of kings. He cast a halo of superiority round monarchy. He took up the title of **Zilli Illah** or shadow of God. Although the Khalifa of Baghdad was no more, he continued to inscribe the name of the deceased Khalifa on his coins. That was due to the fact that he felt that he would be respected and feared more if the royal title was in line with the religious beliefs of the Muslims. Balban expounded his view on monarchy to his son Bughra Khan in these words: "The heart of the King is the special repository of the God's favour and in this he has no equal among mankind."

Balban believed in despotism. His conviction was that only a despot could exact obedience from his subjects and ensure the security of the state. He claimed descent from the mythical Turkish hero, Afrasiyab of Turan and always kept himself aloof from the people. As soon as he came to the throne, he gave up wine and jovial company. He introduced the **Sijda** or prostration and **Paibos** or kissing the feet of the monarch in the court as the normal form of salutation for the king. He introduced the system of **Nauroz** to add to the dignity of his court. By all these means, Balban was able to restore the prestige of the king.

### Estimate

According to L. ne-Poole, "Balban, the slave, water-carrier, huntsman, general, statesman and Sultan is one of the most striking figures among many notable men in the long line of the kings of Delhi". According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "A great warrior, ruler and statesman, who saved the infant Muslim state from extinction at a critical time, Balban will ever remain a great figure in medieval Indian history. He was the precursor of Ala-ud-Din; but for the security and stability which he imparted to the struggling power of the Muslims in India, it would have been impossible for Ala-ud-Din to withstand successfully the Mongol attacks



and to achieve conquests in distant lands, which have won for him an honoured place in the Walhalla of Muslim history." (*Medieval India*, p. 199.)

According to Dr. Habibullah, "Enough has perhaps been said to evaluate his contributions to the making of the Delhi Sultanate. In continuing Aibak and Iltutmish's work he applied an energy and calculation that brought forth warm tributes even from his adversaries. To him, unquestionably, is to be attributed the preservation of the state's integrity at a time when unrestricted expansion threatened to overstrain its resources. By consolidating the conquered areas and destroying the forces of anarchy, he fulfilled a historical need, namely, preparing the Sultanate for further territorial expansion as the next stage of its development. Balban's greatest single achievement lay in the revival of the monarchy as the supreme factor in the state. By the centralisation which it involved—although detailed instances are lacking—Balban's work thus definitely shortened the period of administrative improvisations that marked the 13th century Sultanate. In a large measure he prepared the ground for the Khalji state-system.

"In one aspect of his policy, however, he showed a lamentable lack of statesmanlike vision. This was his extreme racialism which led him to make the Sultanate an exclusive Turkish concern. He effected a great repugnance to associating with what he called men of 'low origin' and could not bear the sight of the native Musalmans in his government. On one occasion he administered a sharp rebuke to his courtiers for having selected a native Musalman for a clerical post in Amroha. His autocracy was intended to emphasize the unchallenged domination of the Turks, although they themselves were conceded very little share in the exercise of sovereign power. It would, therefore, be wrong to designate Balban's state as an oligarchy, but there seems little doubt that he considered himself more the custodian of Turkish sovereignty than a king of the Musalmans. In so doing, he admittedly was following his master Iltutmish who is also reported to have felt an equal abhorrence for the Indian Muslims. But what was defensible in Iltutmish's time was fraught with ruinous consequences in that of Balban. The initial conquest, as has been noted earlier, had the character of a racial movement; its easy success was largely conditioned by the uninterrupted flow of immigrant Turks from beyond the Hindukush. A loose political organisation, held together largely by a common race-sentiment could, and was forced by circumstances to, insist on the preservation of this dominant characteristic. While the overrunning was in progress, this sentiment, coupled with the equally potent tie of religion, worked wonderfully well. This insistence on racialism proved a great help in focussing opposition to the racial aggression of the Mongols. Most of these factors, however, had ceased to be operative by the time Balban commenced his reign. No fresh immigration could reach India from Turkestan on a large scale, while conversion and inter-marriage steadily increased the non-Turkish Musalmans.



Balban himself put an end to continuous territorial expansion and devoted himself to defending the Muslim state from the Hindus and the Mongols. Common interests of safety, which thereby were emphasised, were bound to transcend racial and even religious barriers. Imperceptibly, but with irresistible progress, an integrated Indo-Muslim society was coming into being and the transformation of the Sultanate from the Turkish to an Indo-Muslim state, was well on its way. To resist this process was therefore not only useless but highly unwise. For the steadily-diminishing number of the pure-born Turks it was impossible to maintain predominance. Balban's uncompromising will only gave it an unreal lease of life : his death, consequently, meant the passing of the Turk as the controller of India's destiny." (**The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India**, pp. 179-81.)

According to Barani. "Sultan Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban was a man of experience in matters of government. From being a Malik, he became a Khan and from Khan he became a king . . . . In the first and second years he assumed great state, and made great display of his pomp and dignity. Muslims and Hindus would come from distances of one or two hundred leagues to see the splendour of his equipage, which filled them with amazement. No sovereign had ever before exhibited such pomp and grandeur in Delhi. For the twenty-two years that Balban reigned he maintained the dignity, honour, and majesty of the throne in a manner that could not be surpassed. Certain of his attendants who waited on him in private assured me that they never saw him otherwise than in full dress. During the whole time that he was Khan and Sultan, extending over nearly forty years, he never conversed with persons of low origin or occupation, and never indulged in any familiarity, either with friends or strangers, by which the dignity of the Sovereign could be lowered. He never joked with any one, nor did he allow any one to joke in his presence : he never laughed aloud, nor did he permit any one in his Court to laugh. As long as he lived no officer or acquaintance dared to recommend for employment any person of low position or extraction. In the administration of justice he was inflexible, showing no favour to his brothers or children, to his associates or attendants and if any of them committed an act of injustice he never failed to give redress and comfort to the injured person. No man dared to be too severe to his slaves or hand-maids, to his horsemen or footmen."

It cannot be denied that Balban was very harsh and cruel. In the achievement of his goal, he did not care for the means. He was very cruel towards all those who could in any way challenge his authority. Clemency and forgiveness were not known to him. The only consolation that he had in his mind was that he was able to rule for many decades without any serious challenge to his authority.

In his private life, Balban was affectionate and tender-hearted. The shock of the death of his eldest son, Prince Muhammad,

practically killed him. He gave shelter to thousands of refugees from Central Asia. He was often found in tears while attending a funeral.

Balban was a great patron of learning. A large number of learned men from Central Asia were welcomed. They were given liberal maintenance allowances and also separate quarters. Amir Khusrau, one of the greatest Persian poets, flourished in his time and lived in the court of his son Prince Muhammad. Likewise, Amir Hassan was patronized by Prince Muhammad.

Balban occupies a very prominent place in the history of Muslim rule in India. He raised the prestige of the Delhi Sultanate and gave peace to the people.

### **Kaiqubad (1287-1290)**

Before his death, Balban had nominated his grandson, Kai-khusrau, son of Prince Muhammad, as his successor. However, Fakhr-ud din, the Kotwal of Delhi set aside the nomination of his master and put Kaiqubad, son of Bughra Khan, on the throne. The new king took up the title of Muiz-ud-Din Kaiqubad.

When he became king, Kaiqubad was only 17 years old. A lot of check had been put on his life by Balban. The result was that when he became king he tried to make up for his past deficiency by indulging in wine and women. The example set by the king was followed by his courtiers. The result was that administration was completely neglected. All power was taken into his hands by Nizam-ud-Din, the son-in-law of Fakhr-ud-Din, Kotwal of Delhi, and the Sultan became a puppet in his hands.

### **The Mongols**

The Mongols attacked in the time of Kaiqubad. Their leader was Tamar Khan of Ghazni. They carried rapine and plunder as far as Samana. However, the well-organised defence measures set up by Balban were still strong and no wonder the Mongols were defeated and they had to go back after terrible losses. Malik Baqbaq played an important part in the defeat of the Mongols.

### **Bughra Khan in Delhi**

It is stated that Bughra Khan, the father of Kaiqubad, marched towards Delhi at the head of a big army with a view to snatch the throne from the hands of his son. Another view is that his only object was to advise his son to give up a life of ease and pleasure and attend to his work as king with devotion. Bughra Khan reached the Ghaghra near Ayodhya in 1288. Kaiqubad also proceeded against his father at the head of an equally big army. However, a reconciliation was brought about between the father and the son.

When Bughra Khan advanced to do homage to his son, the latter, overcome by natural feelings, came down from his throne and received his father with great respect. Friendly meetings continued for a few days. Bughra Khan warned his son against the designs of Nizam-ud-Din. They parted with tokens of affection and came

back to their capitals. It is stated that when Bughra Khan started on his journey back to his capital, he observed : "Alas ! I have seen the last of my son, and the last of Delhi."

On his return, Kaiqubad transferred Nizam-ud-Din to Multan and when the latter hesitated to obey, Kaiqubad caused him to be poisoned. Unfortunately, that resulted in the dislocation of the machinery of administration. Kaiqubad appointed Jalal-ud-din Firuz Khalji to the fief of Baran and the command of the army. This appointment was not approved by the Turkish nobles and the people of the capital. At this time, Kaiqubad was stricken with paralysis and he became a helpless wreck in his palace. Jalal-ud-din Firuz took advantage of this opportunity and marched on Delhi. The Turkish nobles put Kayumars, the 3 years old son of Kaiqubad, on the throne, but the sons of Jalal-ud-din Firuz dashed into the city of Delhi and carried away the child king and defeated a force sent in pursuit of them. Most of the Turkish nobles submitted to Firuz and the people adopted an attitude of aloofness. Kaiqubad was put to death and his dead body was thrown into the Jumna. On Jun-13, 1290, Jalal-ud-din Firuz was put on the throne in the palace of Kilghari (**Cambridge Shorter History of India**, p. 173).

According to Sir Wolsley Haig, the rule of the Slave kings, though disfigured by some intolerance and by gross cruelty towards the disaffected, was as just and humane as that of the Norman kings in England and far more tolerant than that of Philip II in Spain and the Netherlands.

### **Nobility vs. Monachy**

It seems desirable to describe in detail the struggle between the nobles on the one hand and monarchy on the other during the Slave dynasty. Muhammad Ghori did not leave any son who could succeed him after his death. The result was that there was a contest for power among the various commanders who had helped him in conquering different parts of the country. Aibak was foremost among them. He was undoubtedly the most capable among them all and Muhammad Ghori mainly depended upon him to carry on the administration of Indian territories. Taj-ud-Din Yaldez was a serious rival of Aibak. The other rivals were Nasir-ud-Din Kabacha and Baha-ud-Din Tughril. All of them at one time or the other competed for supreme power with Aibak but failed. However, the tradition of competing for the throne or at least to capture power in order to control the occupant of the throne was set up from the very foundation of the Delhi Sultanate. This became more and more prominent under the successors of Iluttmish.

After the death of Aibak, the nobles at Lahore proclaimed Aram Shah as their chief. However, the nobles of Delhi took up the cause of Iluttmish. A battle was fought in the vicinity of Delhi in which Aram was killed and Iluttmish came on the throne.

Under Iluttmish, Yaldez, Kabacha and Ali Mardan Khan revolted and gave a lot of trouble to him, but Iluttmish proved himself more than a match for them all. Iluttmish organised the leading

nobles of the kingdom into a college or a society with the purpose of inspiring them with a feeling of loyalty to the throne. The result was that when Iltutmish was dying he appealed to them to accept his daughter Raziya as his successor and they did not dare to express their unwillingness although they knew that there was no precedent for it.

However, after the death of Iltutmish, rival factions arose. There were the supporters of Raziya and there were the supporters of Rukn-ud-Din. The leader of the party in favour of Rukn-ud-Din was Mohammad Junaidi, the Prime Minister himself. He showed no hesitation in discarding the last wishes of Iltutmish. The result was that Rukn-ud-Din was put on the throne. Unfortunately, he proved himself to be utterly useless and the Governors of the provinces and even Wazir Junaidi himself turned against him. They assembled together and marched on Delhi with their combined armies under the command of Riyaz-ud-Din, Governor of Oudh, the younger brother of Rukn-ud-Din. The army of Rukn-ud-Din mutinied and murdered its officers. Rukn-ud-Din was seized and executed in 1236 A.D.

Raziya, who had won over the backing of the people of Delhi, was put on the throne. However, she was not acceptable to the heads of the provinces whose consent had not been obtained in putting her on the throne. The Governors felt that their right of electing the Sultan was ignored. There were many ambitious nobles who opposed Raziya. The result was that Prime Minister Junaidi and several other leading nobles besieged Delhi with their armies. Malik Tayasi, Governor of Oudh, was the only noble who took up the cause of Raziya but he was defeated and killed.

Raziya took up courage to fight against her opponents. She was able to create dissensions among her enemies by winning over two leading Maliks or nobles to her own side. She gave them the assurance that the Wazir and his other friends would be imprisoned. After that, she gave out the secret to the intended victims. The result was that they ran away although they were pursued by the royal army. Fakhr-ud-Din, the brother of the Wazir, and some other members of his party were killed. The Wazir himself took shelter in the northern hills where he died soon after.

The success of Raziya created among the nobles a sense of humiliation and they decided to have revenge. They got an opportunity to revolt when Raziya appointed Jamal-ud-Din Yaqut, an Abyssinian and a non-Turk Amir, as the Superintendent of the Stables. The nobles suspected that this was an attempt on the part of Raziya to raise a party of her own to stand against the growing power of the Turkish nobles. Moreover, they could not tolerate any non-Turk to hold a high position in the Government. Consequently, they revolted but their revolt was suppressed. Raziya decided to appear in public in male attire. This was taken as an excuse by the nobles to revolt against her. They instigated Altunia, the Governor of Bathinda, to take the lead. Yaqut was murdered and Raziya was made a prisoner. The



rebels put Bahram on the throne in 1240. While putting Bahram on the throne, the nobles put many restrictions on his power. It was agreed that Wazir Malik Ikhtiar-ud-Din Aetigin would be made the Naib-i-Mamalik, i.e., Deputy King. It was a new post which was higher than that of the Wazir. Although Bahram accepted all the conditions imposed on him at the time of his succession, he got sick of them very soon. He also found himself unable to put up with the arrogance of the Naib and the Wazir. He secretly instigated two members of the Turkish party to stab them. The result was that Aetigin was killed, but the Wazir escaped. The king refused to fill the post of Naib-i-Mamalik. Badr-ud-Din Sanqar, Amir Hajib or Master of Ceremonies, behaved in a most improper manner by assuming almost all royal authority. He went to the extent of conspiring with the Wazir to depose the king. Unfortunately, the Wazir betrayed Sanqar and revealed the plot to Bahram. The latter promptly rushed to the meeting place of the conspirators and caught them red-handed. After some time, Sanqar raised another party against the king but was executed. This created among the Turkish nobles feelings of resentment and fear. The result was that the nobles joined hands and they were helped by the Wazir who was able to win over the support of the Ulema. There was a long siege of Delhi and ultimately the nobles were able to capture it. Bahram was also murdered in 1242 A.D. The nobles put Ala-ud-Din Masud on the throne. They imposed on him the same conditions as they had done in the case of Bahram. It is stated that Malik Kishlu Khan became so impatient to capture power that he seated himself on the throne and declared himself as a king. However, he was dis-owned by his own party-men and hence nothing came out of it. Masud tried to choose his Ministers and advisers from those persons who were loyal to him.

At this time, Balban came to the front. He was one of the Forty slaves brought up by Iltutmish. By cleverness, he was able to dispose of the Wazir. After that, he became the undisputed leader of the Turkish party. Minhaj, the historian, was a very senior and enthusiastic member of his party. To begin with, Balban tried to win over Masud to his side. At the same time, he tried to build up a clique to overthrow Masud on the ground that the latter had not allowed himself to be treated as a non-entity by Balban and his party. Balban was able to persuade Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud, the younger son of Iltutmish, to be used as a tool to destroy Masud and place him on the throne. It is true that Masud was very popular with the people but the conspiracy against him was so secret that he was completely ignorant about the same till he was captured and thrown into prison. Nasir-ud-Din was put on the throne.

Balban emerged as a leader of the Turkish party and by and by he was able to dispose of all his rivals. He got himself appointed as Amir Hajib in place of Qaraqash. The result was that the party led by the old Wazir Nizam-ul-Mulk was broken up and Balban became the undisputed leader of the party. All this hap-

pened in 1246. After that, Balban gradually rose to the highest position in the State and the Sultan was reduced to the position of a mere symbol or "Namunah" as described by Barani.

After some time, dissensions arose among the nobles themselves. There were many nobles who were not prepared to tolerate the dominant position occupied by Balban. The Sultan also was feeling that the control of Balban over him was too much. Imad-ud-Din Raihan, who was the leader of the Hindustani party (which included the Indian nobles), assured the Sultan his full support against Balban. The Sultan was persuaded to dismiss Balban in order to free himself from the clutches of his domineering Wazir. Balban was banished to a distant place so that he may not be a danger to the Sultan. Raihan was appointed the Wazir and he dismissed the party-men of Balban from all high offices and their places were taken over by Hindustani Muslim dignitaries.

Balban also hit back. He tried to win over the sympathies of the Turkish nobles by pointing out to them that on account of their mutual dissensions they had to put up with indignities and humiliations. He appealed to them to sink their differences and capture power by their combined efforts. There were many nobles who were suspicious of Balban and refused to join him. However, there were some nobles who were won over by Balban and it was with their support that he marched upon Delhi. He was not sure of his success against the forces organised by Raihan to defend the Sultan. Consequently, he resorted to the device of sending a deputation to the king. The members of the deputation told the king that Balban and the other nobles would be happy to support him loyally if he only dismissed Raihan and his party-men. The Sultan was a very selfish man. He completely forgot that if once Balban came to power, he would make him a tool in his hands. He also did not show any feelings of gratitude towards Raihan who had rescued him from the clutches of Balban. The Sultan unsuspectingly walked into the trap. Raihan was dismissed and Balban was restored to his previous position. After regaining power, Balban had his full revenge. He managed to destroy Raihan and his party-men. The mother of the Sultan was also disposed of. Many other measures were adopted by Balban to destroy the authority and the strength of the nobles.

It is clear from above that the nobles during this period were very strong. No ruler could afford to ignore them. The Turks had no fixed and universally accepted law of succession and this gave enough scope to ambitious nobles to enter into intrigues to satisfy their selfish ambitions for the possession of de facto power behind the throne. In certain cases, the nobles themselves became kings. The struggle for supremacy between the nobles on the one side and the monarchy on the other was inevitable.

About the position of the Muslim kingdom of Delhi, Sir Wolseley Haig observes: "The Muhammadan kingdom of Delhi was not a homogeneous political entity. The government was

feudal, but differed from the feudal system of Europe in that the fief-holders had no hereditary, or even personal, title to their fiefs, but might be, and often were, transferred from one fief to another. The great fiefs, in which the fief-holders discharged most of the functions of provincial governors, were centres of Muslim influence, but the subordinate machinery of government and the agency for the ordinary collection of the revenue were largely Hindu, and the tiller of the soil probably found very little difference between Muslim and Hindu rule, since under neither was he usually allowed to retain more of the fruits of his labour than sufficed to satisfy the most frugal needs of himself and his family. When, owing to the weakness of the central government, or of a local administration he withheld his land-rent, or followed a rebellious Hindu chieftain into the field, he was often barbarously treated, but he was punished for contumacy or rebellion, not, as the rhapsodies of pious Muslim historians might lead us to believe, for idolatry. Nor was Muslim rule firmly established throughout the area within its geographical limits. The north-western frontier districts were constantly devastated by Mongol inroads; the Khokhars were only occasionally in subjection; the fortresses of Gwalior, Ranthambhor, and Nagaur changed hands more than once; the great fiefs were interspersed with lands held by the Hindu chieftains, whose subjection was as fitful as that of the Khokhars; Mewat had been harassed, but never subdued; the Hindus of the Doab were frequently in revolt; those of Katehr harried the eastern frontier; and the great fiefs in the west were merely outposts against the chiefs of Rajasthan. What enabled a comparatively small foreign garrison to maintain its supremacy over Hindustan, the Punjab, and Bengal, was its religious homogeneity and the impossibility of any union among the Hindus. From them the spirit of caste has for ages ousted the sentiment of nationality. Caste despises caste, or resents in caste the assumption of superiority. The Brahman condemns the cultivator; the cultivator resents the attitude of the Brahman; both despise the menial. Each Rajput clan deems itself superior to any other, and there has never been an Indian nation. Another factor in the stability of Muslim rule was the gradual Indianisation of the ruling class. The original invaders had nothing in common with India, but they made it their home, and their descendants knew no other. Many Hindus accepted the religion of their conquerors, and thus made inter-marriage possible, and Hindu concubines taken in war introduced Hindu blood into Muslim families. Even from the works of bigoted Muslim historians, much evidence of the gradual Indianisation of the invaders may be gathered. But even as today, to the Muslim the Hindu was ever an idolatrous misbeliever, and to the Hindu the Muslim as ever an unclean Mlechchha" (*Cambridge Shorter History of India*, pp. 171-72).

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## CHAPTER VII

# The Khalji Dynasty (1290—1320)

### Jalal-ud-Din Firuz Khalji (1290-1296)

Jalal-ud-Din Khalji was the founder of the Khalji dynasty. He came to power after the overthrow of the so-called Slave Dynasty. This event has been described by Dr R. P. Tripathi as the Khalji Revolution. Dr. Tripathi is of the opinion that "One of the most significant consequences of the Khalji Revolution was that it gave a heavy blow to the growing sentiment of loyalty that was gathering round the throne of Delhi and was likely to bear good results. If the Khaljis had not nipped in the bud the traditions of dignity and loyalty and had allowed them to grow up and reach full stature, the element of militarism would have been minimized, and new traditions of rights and duties of command and obedience would have properly crystallised as in some other countries of the world. Unfortunately, Khalji Revolution threw into shade the civil side of the government, and accentuating the military aspects established a dangerous precedent that continued to sap the vitality of the Delhi Sultanate."

Dr. K. S. Lal says : "The Khalji Revolution was fraught with far-reaching consequences. It not only heralded the advent of a new dynasty : it ushered in an era of ceaseless conquests, of unique experiment in statecraft, and of incomparable literary activity. In the veins of the Khaljis did not flow the royal blood. They belonged to the proletariat and their accession to power dealt a death-blow to the pseudo-belief that sovereignty was a monopoly of the privileged. The Khalji revolt is essentially a revolt of the Indian Muslims against the Turkish hegemony, of those who looked to Delhi, against those who sought inspiration from Ghaur and Ghazna. The revolution resulted in the supercession of a commoner's government over that of the blueblood's and shocked to their marrow many a high-browed Turk to whom other Musalmans, Indian born or otherwise, were made of a stuff inferior to their own." (*History of the Khaljis*, pp. 13-14.)

The assumption of royal power by Jalal-ud-Din Khalji was not universally accepted. The leading Turkish Amirs hated the Khaljis who were considered to be low-born Afghans. Some of the

relatives of Balban like Malik Chhajju were still alive and they would like to overthrow Jalal-ud-Din. The people of Delhi were also not happy over his accession to the throne and consequently Jalal-ud-Din had to remain at Kilokhri for a year before he could shift to Delhi. Kilokhri was a new city which had been built by Kaiqubad a few miles away from Delhi. The new Sultan entered Delhi only when he felt that he had won over the people by his acts of generosity. Malik Chhajju was allowed to retain the governorship of Kara Manikpur. Malik Fakhr-ud-Din was confirmed as the Kotwal of Delhi. The Sultan confirmed the Turkish nobles in the offices they held during the previous reign. Malik Ahmad Chap was appointed Amir-i-Hajib or Master of Ceremonies. Ala-ud-Din and Almas Beg were also rewarded.

It is true that before becoming king, Jalal-ud-Din had won many battles and was known to be the most experienced and powerful Turkish nobleman, but after becoming king, he decided to follow a policy of peace. He refused to shed the blood of any Muslim for political or territorial gains. He was not prepared to use his sword even to punish rebels, thieves or **Thugs**. No wonder, Professor S. R. Sharma calls him, "Clemency King Firuz". He further observes that Firuz was too kind to be a king in an age when blood and iron alone could tell. His mild policy was resented by his followers and the same was attributed to his old age and cowardice.

### **Revolt of Malik Chhajju**

During the second year of his reign, Jalal-ud-Din had to face the revolt of Malik Chhajju. The original name of Chhajju was Kishlu Khan. He was a nephew of Balban and would like to put himself on the throne, if possible. He opposed Jalal-ud-Din before he became king but after his accession, he submitted and was given the Jagir of Kara. In spite of this, Chhajju entered into an alliance with Hatim, Governor of Avadh, and raised the standard of revolt. At the head of his followers, Chhajju marched towards Delhi. Arkali Khan, son of Jalal-ud-Din, was sent against Chhajju, Chhajju was defeated and he and his followers were captured and brought before the Sultan. Instead of punishing them, the Sultan pardoned them and fed them from the royal kitchen. Chhajju was sent to Multan and arrangements were made for his comforts. The Sultan also praised the loyalty of the followers of Chhajju to their master. The young Khaljis, led by Ahmad Chap, protested against this policy and warned the Sultan of the consequences of such a weak policy. However, the Sultan did not pay any heed. Kara was given to Ala-ud-Din, the son-in-law of Jalal-ud-Din.

### **Thugs and Thieves**

A similar policy was followed by Jalal-ud-Din while dealing with thieves and robbers. It is pointed out that thefts and robberies had become common on account of the general confusion prevailing in the country. Once upon a time, a number of thieves were arrested and brought before the Sultan. Instead of punishing them, the Sultan gave them a lecture on the evils of stealing.

On another occasion, thousands of thugs and murderers, who had made the lives of the people of Delhi intolerable, were captured. Instead of punishing them, the Sultan sent them to Bengal in boats down the Ganges and there they were set free.

### **The Amirs**

Some Amirs were so disgusted with the mild policy of the Sultan that they began to discuss openly plans to overthrow him. In one of the social gatherings, plans were drawn to depose and murder Jalal-ud-Din and put Taj-ud-Din Kuchi or Ahmad Chap on the throne. However, the Sultan came to know of those plans and rebuked the Amirs for their conduct. He threw his sword before them and challenged any one of them to have the courage to use the same against him. That had the desired effect. After a stern warning, the Sultan pardoned the Amirs.

### **Siddi Maula**

However, there was one departure from his policy of leniency in the case of Siddi Maula. The Maula was a disciple of Shaikh Farid-ud-Din Ganj-i-Shakar of Pak-Pattan. The Maula had built a very big Khankah. He fed thousands of poor people daily. The big nobles of the kingdom also went to the Maula for religious instructions. The allegation was that a plot had been formed by a number of Amirs to murder the Sultan and put Siddi Maula on the throne. The plot was unearthed and Siddi Maula and his principal followers were arrested. While arguing with Siddi Maula, Jalal-ud-Din lost his temper and had him put to death by an elephant. A Muslim fanatic who was opposed to Siddi Maula, slashed the Maula several times with a razor and stabbed him with a packing needle. The Sultan who had pardoned rebels, traitors and thieves was responsible for the death of a man of peace whose fault had yet to be established. It is said that at the time of the death of the saint, there was a huge storm and the people attributed it to the great injustice done to the Darvaish.

### **Ranthambor**

As regards his foreign policy, he led his first expedition against Ranthambor in 1290. The ruler offered stiff resistance. The result was that the Sultan gave up the campaign and came back to Delhi. The plea put forward by the Sultan was that "he did not value the fort so much as the hair of one Mussalman." Ahmad Chap tried to impress upon the Sultan the dangers of such a policy but that had absolutely no effect on him.

### **Ala-ud-Din's Exploits**

Another expedition was undertaken against **Mandawar** which was captured in 1292. In the same year, Ala-ud-Din invaded **Malwa** and captured the town of Bhilsa. On his return, Ala-ud-Din was made the Governor of Avadh in addition to that of Kara. In 1294, Ala-ud-Din defeated Rani Chandra Deva, the ruler of **Devagiri**. He brought from there a lot of wealth.

## The Mongols

India was attacked by the Mongols during the reign of Jalal-ud-Din. Abdullah, grandson of Halaku, attacked India in 1292. In spite of his old age, Jalal-ud-Din went in person to oppose them and was successful in defeating them. However, the Sultan allowed some of the Mongols to settle in India. The descendants of those Mongols came to be known as New Mussalmans.

## Devagiri

Ala-ud-Din was the nephew and son-in-law of Jalal-ud-Din. He was a very ambitious man. He heard of the wealth of the Deccan and decided to have the same. He started for the Deccan at the head of 18,000 horsemen. While proceeding towards the Deccan, he gave out that he was dissatisfied with his uncle and was going to the South to have service under some Hindu ruler. The result was that no resistance was offered to him on the way. However, when he entered the boundaries of Devagiri, Raja Ram Chandra decided to give battle to Ala-ud-Din Khalji but he was defeated. At that time, a large number of soldiers of Devagiri had gone to the South to fight against a fellow Hindu Raja. It was due to this reason that the ruler of Devagiri was defeated and he was made to pay a heavy tribute. When the son of Ram Chandra came back from the South with his troops, he refused to pay tribute as promised and decided to fight. It is true that for some time the Hindu armies had the upper hand but ultimately they were defeated. Ala-ud-Din came back to Kara after getting a lot of riches.

## Murder of Jalal-ud-Din

It is contended that when Ala-ud-Din had gone to Devagiri, the advisers of the Sultan tried to impress upon him that Ala-ud-Din was a very ambitious person and had his eye on the throne and timely action should be taken against him. The only reply of Jalal-ud-Din was that he loved Ala-ud-Din as his son and was prepared to do anything for him. Ulugh Khan, brother of Ala-ud-Din, tried to impress upon the Sultan that Ala-ud-Din was anxious to present to the Sultan the wealth he had got from Devagiri but he was afraid of coming to Delhi as he had undertaken the expedition to Devagiri without the consent of the Sultan. Disregarding the warnings of his advisers<sup>1</sup>, Jalal-ud-Din decided to go to Kara to meet his son-in-law there. The Sultan left Delhi for Kara. Ala-ud-Din crossed the Ganges to Manikpur. While keeping his army in readiness, he sent his brother Ulugh Khan to persuade the Sultan to fall into the trap laid for him. Ulugh Khan met the Sultan and persuaded him not to allow his army to cross the eastern bank of the river Ganges as Ala-ud-Din was still afraid of the Sultan and might either commit suicide or take refuge by flight. The Sultan acted accordingly in spite of the protests of his followers. Jalal-ud-Din went to meet his son-in-law with a few unarmed attendants. Jalal-ud-Din embraced

<sup>1</sup>Striking his hands together, Ahmad Chap cried: "If you return to Delhi, you slay us with your own hand."





According to Dr. A. C. Banerjee, "So far as the case of the Muslim rulers of India is concerned, military force proved to be a more potent source of sovereignty than the doctrines of the Ulama. Theoretical speculations had very little influence on the rough Turkish soldiers who made themselves master of India. They conquered the country by force; they maintained their authority by force, and they lost their position when they failed to command adequate force. All their followers—soldiers, poets and ulama alike—understood the situation thoroughly well, and never cared or dared to investigate in the legal claims of their *de facto* master. When Ala-ud-Din Khalji treacherously murdered his uncle and occupied the throne to which he had not a shadow of claim either by divine or by human law, not only the 'unthinking rabble', but the best minds of the day—the great poet, Amir Khusrau, for instance—bowed down before the realities of the situation. And while we shed our tears for the old Sultan who was so basely struck by one whom he loved so much it is necessary to remember that he himself had assassinated his master to seize the throne" (*Medieval Studies*, p. 101).

As regards an estimate of Jalal-ud-Din, he was a successful general before becoming king but gave up the policy of aggression after becoming the Sultan. He followed a policy of peace and reconciliation towards all. He was very modest. It is stated that he did not ride in the courtyard of the palace of Balban and also refused to sit upon it on the ground that he used to stand before it as a servant. The Mongols were successfully repulsed by the Sultan. However, the Sultan was intolerant towards the Hindus. He destroyed and desecrated their temples and broke their images. He was responsible for the death of Siddi Maula.

Dr. K. S. Lal gives his estimate of Jalal-ud-Din in these words: "Failure as a king, Firoz was a perfect gentleman and one of the most pious Musalmans of his times. Fortune as well as merit had raised him to the highest pinnacle of greatness, still his elevation had not made him proud. God-fearing and indulgent, affectionate to his family and kind to all, he behaved with his nobles not as a king but as a friend. Jalal's span of kingship was short but he ruled over his subjects as a father in a family. He declared himself incapable of tyranny. If his simplicity and his kindness were ridiculed by the worldly people, his age and benevolence were revered by all." (*History of the Khaljis*, p. 18.)

### Ala-ud-Din Khalji (1296-1316)

#### Accession

Ala-ud-Din Khalji was the nephew of Jalal-ud-Din Firuz. As Ala-ud-Din was fatherless, he was brought up by Jalal-ud-Din with affection and care and also made his son-in-law. When Jalal-ud-Din became the Sultan, he gave Ala-ud-Din the fief of Kara in the district of Allahabad. It was here that Ala-ud-Din became ambitious. Barani tells us that "crafty suggestions of the Kara rebels made a lodgement in his brain, and, from the very first year of his

occupation of that territory, he began to follow up his design of proceeding to some distant quarter and amassing money." Due to the intrigues of Malika-Jahan, his mother-in-law, and his wife which made him unhappy, Ala-ud-Din decided to make himself independent of Delhi. In 1292, he successfully invaded Malwa and captured the town of Bhilsa. He was also given the fief of Avadh. Ala-ud-Din also invaded Devagiri and defeated its ruler. He came back to Kara with a lot of booty in gold, silver, silk, pearls and precious stones. He had no intention of sharing this wealth with Sultan Jalal-ud-Din and through cleverness was able to bring about his murder. On 19th July, 1296, Ala-ud-Din was proclaimed Sultan in his camp. Barani rightly points out that Ala-ud-Din also "did not escape retribution for the blood of his patron.....Fate at length placed a betrayer in his path (Malik Kafur) by whom his family was destroyed...and the retribution which befell upon it never had a parallel even in any infidel land."

### Rival on Throne

The murder of Jalal-ud-Din did not put Ala-ud-Din on the throne of Delhi. As soon as **Malika Jahan** learnt about the murder of her husband, she put her younger son **Qadir Khan Rukm-ud-Din** (Ibrahim) on the throne and called for her elder son Arkali Khan from Multan. Without wasting any time, Ala-ud-Din marched towards Delhi from Kara. On his way to Delhi, he scattered small gold and silver coins among the people. The distribution of the gold brought by Ala-ud-Din from the South won for him a large number of followers. He was also able to win over the bulk of the army by fair and foul means. When Ibrahim found that resistance was impossible, he fled towards Multan with his mother and Ahmad Chap. Ala-ud-Din entered Delhi and occupied the palace of Balban. On 3rd October, 1296, he was proclaimed the Sultan of Delhi.

It is true that Ala-ud-Din was on the throne of Delhi but he knew that his position was still insecure. No wonder, he sent a large army under his brother Ulugh Khan to capture his rivals. Ulugh Khan captured Multan and blinded Ibrahim, Arkali Khan and Ahmed Chap. Malika Jahan, widow of Jalal-ud-Din, was imprisoned.

### Destruction of Jalali Nobles

Ala-ud-Din also had to deal with the Jalali nobles who were not loyal to him. Nusrat Khan was deputed to take strong measures against them. Their Jagirs were confiscated. Those nobles who had been won over by Ala-ud-Din with the help of money were also punished. The contention of Ala-ud-Din was that those nobles who had not been faithful to his uncle and could be bought with gold by him, could also betray him if an opportunity arose. The result was that some of those nobles were blinded, some were thrown into prison and some were put to death. Their Jagirs were incorporated in the Khalsa land. The wealth confiscated from them was put in the state treasury. It is estimated that Nusrat Khan added about a crore to the royal treasury.

## Mongol Invasions

Ala-ud-Din had to face more than a dozen Mongol invasions. These invasions started from the end of 1296 and continued up to 1308 A.D. The Mongols threatened not only the Punjab, Multan and Sindh but even Delhi and the Ganga-Yamuna Doab.

The first Mongol invasion took place at the end of 1296. Zafar Khan was despatched against them. He defeated the Mongols near Jullundur and a large number of them were killed.

The second invasion took place in 1297. The Mongols had become so bold that they were able to capture the fort of Siri near Delhi. However, Zafar Khan who was responsible for the defence of the north-western frontier, defeated the Mongols and recaptured the fort of Siri. The Mongol leader along with 1,700 followers was captured and brought to Delhi.

The third Mongol invasion took place in 1299 under their leader Qutlugh Khwaja. The Mongol leader had an army of more than two lakhs under his command. The Mongols had come to India this time not to plunder but to conquer the territory. Consequently, they did not plunder the people on the way to Delhi and after reaching the capital, they besieged the same. The situation was so grave that Ala-ud-Din consulted his friend Ala-ul-Mulk, the Kotwal, regarding the course of action to be adopted. The Kotwal advised Ala-ud-Din not to fight against the Mongols but to come to terms with them<sup>1</sup>. However, Ala-ud-Din rejected his advice and attacked the Mongols. The advance guard of the army was led by Zafar Khan who defeated the Mongols and pursued them relentlessly. However, Zafar Khan was surrounded by the Mongols and killed in the battle-field. This did not improve matters and after some time the Mongols lost heart and retreated. The terror created by Zafar Khan in the minds of the Mongols was so great that whenever their horses did not drink water, the Mongol soldiers urged them "by asking whether they had seen Zafar Khan that they feared to slake their thirst." Ala-ud-Din did not mind the death of Zafar Khan as he considered him to be dangerous to his own position.

The fourth Mongol invasion took place in 1303 when Ala-ud-Din was busy with the siege of Chittor. A Mongol army 12,000 strong under Targhi, its leader, reached Delhi by forced marches. The movements of the Mongols were so quick that the governors

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1. The advice of the Kotwal was in these words: "Ancient monarchs have invariably abstained from hazardous conflicts in which it is impossible to say as to which side victory is likely to incline. In case of a conflict between equally powerful chiefs, when the kingdom is staked on a single throw of the dice, monarchs have exercised their utmost discretion and have warded off the event as long as they could.....Why does your Majesty then purposely, wilfully, and without paying any heed or attention, enter into a perilous crisis? You may delay in engaging these Mongols.....Our army is composed principally of the soldiers of Hindustan, who have spent their lives in warfare with the Hindus only, and have not joined in battle with the Mongols, and are consequently ignorant of their cunning system of tactics, their sallies, their ambuscades and other stratagems."



were not able to send their contingents to Delhi. Ala-ud-Din was forced to take shelter in the fort of Siri which was besieged by the Mongols for two months. During this interval, the Mongols plundered not only the surrounding territory but also Delhi itself. Minor skirmishes were fought on two or three occasions but neither party was able to gain any decisive advantage. The patience of Targhi, who had come prepared only for a victory, was exhausted and he retired after a stay of about a couple of months as he found the lines of Ala-ud-Din entrenchment impenetrable. The retreat of the Mongols seemed to be miraculous. To quote Barani, "This occasion, on which the army of Islam had received no injury from the Mongol force, and the city of Delhi had escaped unharmed, appeared one of the miracles of the age to all intelligent persons ; for the Mongols had arrived in great force early in the season, and had blockaded the roads against the entry of reinforcements or supplies; and the royal army was suffering under the want of proper equipment, while they (the Mongols) were in the most flourishing and hearty condition." Although Barani attributes the retreat of the Mongols to the supplications of the poor and the prayers of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, yet the real reason of the Mongol retreat lies in something else. According to Dr. K.S. Lal, it lies in the prompt action of Ala-ud-Din who would not yield to the enemy on any ground whatsoever and who undertook such defensive measures as even to baffle the Mongol veteran. It also lies in the fact that on account of their pre-occupation in Central Asia, the Mongols could never permit themselves to stay in Hindustan for long. Hence, if they could not overcome the armies of Hindustan within a short time, they would surely and suddenly return to their homeland in Central Asia.

The seriousness of the Mongolian invasion forced Ala-ud-Din to take effective measures. Not only the old forts in the Punjab, Multan and Sindh were repaired, new ones were also built. Those forts were garrisoned with troops. An additional army was created for the purpose of guarding the frontier and a special governor known as the Warden of the Marches was appointed to protect the frontier. However, in spite of these measures, a Mongol army under the leadership of Ali Beg and Tartaq invaded the Punjab and appeared in the neighbourhood of Amroha. The Mongols plundered and burnt the territory on the way. Ghazi Malik and Malik Kafur were sent against them. They overtook the Mongols when they were going back with their plunder. The Mongols were defeated and their leaders were made prisoners. The top-most Mongol leaders were trampled to death by elephants. The other prisoners were also put to death and their heads put in the walls of the fort of Siri.

The Mongols appeared once again in 1306. They crossed the Indus near Multan and proceeded towards the Himalayas. Ghazi Malik who had been appointed the Governor of the Punjab in 1305, intercepted the Mongols and a large number of them were killed. 50,000 Mongols were made prisoners including Kubak, their leader.

They were put to death and their children and wives were sold as slaves.

The last Mongol invasion took place in 1307-8 under their leader Iqbalmand. It is true that he crossed the Indus but he could not make any headway after that. He was defeated along with his followers and also killed. A large number of Mongols were made prisoners and sent to Delhi where they were all put to death. The Mongols did not dare to attack India after 1308. Ala-ud-Din was able to reign in peace.

Ala-ud-Din followed the frontier policy of Balban. He strengthened the defences of the frontier. The most capable and trusted officers were put in charge of that area. Ghazi Malik was appointed the Governor of the Punjab in 1305 and he was able to check the Mongol invasions. All important forts on the route of the Mongols were repaired. New workshops to manufacture improved types of weapons were set up. Powerful armies were stationed at Dipalpur, Samana and Multan. The Mongols who had embraced Islam and settled in India were massacred. Even their wives and children were brutally murdered. However, these harsh measures frightened the Mongols to such an extent that they gave up the idea of conquering India.

The Mongol Policy of Ala-ud-Din was very successful. Ala-ud-Din had to keep a large standing army ready to meet the danger from the Mongols. However, when as a result of the successful frontier policy, the danger from the Mongols disappeared, the same army was utilized in the conquest of Southern India. Khalji militarism was also due to the fact that Ala-ud-Din had to maintain a large army to check the Mongol invasions. Most of the economic measures of Ala-ud-Din were adopted to meet the expenses of the huge army which had to be set up to meet the Mongol danger.

About the measure of success achieved by Ala-ud-Din against the Mongols, Dr. K.S. Lal observes that the Mongol menace which had made his predecessors tremble on their throne was put to an end by him. His reformatory measures, his huge army and above all his generalship relieved the Empire of a menace that was continually haunting the rulers and people of India. Not only did the Mongols cease their aggression against India but according to Barani and Ferishta, Ghazi Tughlaq who was appointed at Deopalur with a strong force "every year led expeditions to Kabul, Ghazni, Qandhar and Garmsir, plundered and ravaged those regions and levied tribute from their inhabitants. The Mongols had not the courage to come and defend their own frontiers against him."

Dr. K. S. Lal attributes the defeat of the Mongols to many causes. He points out that the idea of world conquest which had been the driving force of the Mongol Empire, was lost in the wars among the various descendants of Chingiz Khan. The Mongols who invaded India were sent by the Khans of Transoxiana. They had rebelled against the Great Khans of China and were mostly busy with their internal problems in Central Asia. Dava Khan fought some

40 battles in Central Asia and hence was not left with enough of energy and time which he could devote to the conquest of India. Prof. Habib is also of the view that it was the discord among the Mongols and their own internecine warfare which saved the kingdom of Delhi.

Dr. Lal also points out that the number of the Mongols who invaded India has been unduly exaggerated. The Mongols who attacked India included among them women, children and old men. This may have added to their total number but that could not add to their military strength. The Mongols were also joined by adventurers from the Afghans and the Khokhars with the sole object of plunder. They were neither interested in the conquest of India nor in helping the Mongols to defeat the Sultan. Such an army could not be expected to succeed. Moreover, the qualities of the early Mongols disappeared with the passage of time and as they no longer possessed the qualities of patience and endurance, Ala-ud-Din was able to exhaust their patience on the occasion of the two sieges of Delhi in 1300 and 1303. The Mongols had also lost their former agility and mobility and no wonder they were defeated by Ala-ud-Din. Another cause of their failure was that Dava Khan died in 1306 and there was disorder in Transoxiana after his death. Within a period of 2/3 years, three Khans, Kuyuk, Kubak and Taliku, ascended the throne. Things were so unsettled that Kubak was forced to abdicate. Although he was reinstated in 1321, he was not able to reorganise the Mongols and send them to India.

Another factor which helped was the policy of offensive followed by Ala-ud-Din Khalji. As a true military strategist, Ala-ud-Din came to the conclusion that the best way to deal with the Mongols was to strike at their own bases. In pursuance of this policy, he sent his armies across the mountain passes to attack the Mongol bases at Kabul, Ghazni and Qandhar. This strategy paralysed the Mongols.

Dr. K.S. Lal points out that the main cause of the Mongol defeat was that they had to fight against Ala-ud-Din who himself was a war-lord. Ala-ud-Din considered it his duty to defend his Empire against the Mongols and this he did with all the resources at his command. He carried out various reforms, he raised a huge army and through studied determination, repulsed the Mongol incursions until they stopped altogether.

### **Conquest of Gujarat**

After the first Mongol invasion, Ala-ud-Din sent Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan to conquer Gujarat in 1299. Although it had been occasionally conquered, it had remained unsubdued. At that time, it was being ruled by Rai Karan Deva II, a Bagela Rajput Prince. The Delhi army besieged Anhilwara and captured it. Kamla Devi, the beautiful queen of Karan Deva II, fell into the hands of the invaders and she was taken away to Delhi where she was made the favourite queen by Ala-ud-Din. However, Karan Deva and his daughter, Deval Devi, took refuge with king Ram Chandra Deva of Devagiri. The Delhi army plundered the rich ports of Gujarat and took away a large amount of booty and a eunuch named Kafur. This



Kafur ultimately rose to be the most influential person in the state. He became virtually the master for some time before and after the death of Ala-ud-Din. There was some trouble with regard to the division of the spoils and the new Mussalmans revolted but they were ruthlessly put down and practically exterminated.

### **Dreams of Ala-ud-Din**

Ala-ud-Din achieved great success during the first three years of his reign. Sons were born to him. Victories were won by his generals and a lot of wealth was brought by them. He had no enemy or rival to fear. According to Zia-ud-Din Barani, "All this prosperity intoxicated him. Vast desires and great aims far beyond him formed their germs in his brain and he entertained fancies which had never occurred to any king before him. In his exaltation, ignorance and folly, he quite lost his head, forming the most impossible schemes and cherishing the most extravagant desires. He was bad-tempered, obstinate, hard-hearted, but the world smiled upon him, fortune befriended him and his schemes were generally successful, so he only became the more reckless and arrogant." The Sultan began to cherish the dream of founding a new religion and conquering the world like Alexander the Great. Ala-ud-Din began to dream like this : "God Almighty gave the blessed Prophet four friends, through whose energy and power the law and religion were established, and through this establishment of law and religion, the name of the Prophet will endure to the Day of Judgment. God has given me also four friends, Ulugh Khan, Zafar Khan, Nusrat Khan, and Alap Khan, who through my prosperity, have attained to princely power and dignity. If I am so inclined, I can, with the help of these four friends, establish a new religion and creed ; and my sword, and the swords of my friends, will bring all men to adopt it. Through this religion, my name and those of my friends will remain among men to the last day, like names of the Prophet and his friends.....I have wealth, and elephants, and forces beyond all calculation. My wish is to place Delhi in charge of a vicegerent, and then, I will go out myself into the world, like Alexander, in pursuit of conquest, and subdue the whole habitable world."

Ala-ud-Din consulted Malik Ala-ul-Mulk, uncle of Zia-ud-Din Barani, and the latter gave the following advice : "Religion and law spring from heavenly revelation ; they are never established by the plans and designs of men. From the days of Adam till now they have been the mission of Prophets and Apostles, as rule and government have been the duty of kings. The prophetic office has never appertained to kings, and never will so long as the world lasts, though some Prophets have discharged the functions of royalty. My advice is that Your Majesty should never talk about these matters. Your Majesty knows what rivers of blood Chingiz Khan made to flow in Muhammadan cities, but he never was able to establish the Mughal religion or institutions among Muhammadans. Many Mughals have turned Mussalmans but no Mussalman has ever become a Mughal." The Sultan agreed to accept the advice of Malik Ala-ul-Mulk and took to the task of conquering the whole of India.



## Ranthambor

Although Ranthambor had been conquered by Qutb-ud-Din and Iltutmish, it had become independent. At the time of Ala-ud-Din, it was being ruled by Hamir Deva, a Rajput chief. Two reasons have been given for the invasion of Ranthambor by Ala-ud-Din. The first reason was that Hamir Deva had given shelter to some New Muslims and this offended Ala-ud-Din. He would like to punish Hamir Deva for his audacity. Another reason was that Ala-ud-Din considered it as his pious duty to recover a fortress that had once formed a part of the Sultanate of Delhi. In 1299, he sent an expedition under Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan. They reduced Jhain and encamped before Ranthambor. However, they were beaten by the Rajputs. Nusrat Khan was killed by a stone discharged from a catapult. Jhain was also recovered by the Rajputs. When Ala-ud-din heard of this, he personally proceeded against Ranthambor. When he was on his way to Ranthambor, he was attacked and wounded by his nephew Akat Khan, in concert with some New Muslims. However, Akat Khan was captured and put to death along with his associates. As regards the capture of Ranthambor, Ala-ud-Din resorted to treachery. He seduced Ran Mal, Prime Minister of Hamir Deva. It was with the help given by Ran Mal that the besiegers were able to climb up the walls of the fortress and take possession of it in July 1301. Hamir Deva and the New Muslims who had taken shelter with him, were put to death. Amir Khusro tells us that "One night the Rai lit a fire at the top of the hill, and threw his women and family into the flames and rushing on the enemy with a few devoted adherents, they sacrificed their lives in despair." The author of **Hammir-Mahakavya** gives a different account of the death of Hamir Deva. It is stated there that the defeat of Hamir Deva was due to the defection of his two generals, Ratipal and Krishnapal. Hamir Deva was severely wounded and when he felt that his end was near, he cut off his head with his own sword instead of submitting to the Muslims.

It is to be noted that Ran Mal was not spared by Ala-ud-Din. It was felt that if he could be faithless to his master, nothing could be expected of him in future. No wonder, he was also put to death by the orders of Ala-ud-Din.

## Mewar

The next expedition was sent by Ala-ud-Din against Mewar, the land of the brave Guhila Rajputs. This expedition was the outcome of the ambitions of Ala-ud-Din for territorial expansion. There is a tradition that the immediate cause of the expedition against Mewar was the desire of Ala-ud-Din to marry Padmani, the wife of Rana Ratan Singh of Chittor. The fort of Chittor was besieged and Ala-ud-Din pitched his canopy on the top of an adjacent hill known as Chittori. The siege lasted for about 5 months and all attempts to capture it failed. The brave Rajputs put up such a stiff resistance that even their enemy admired their bravery. However, when further resistance became impossible, the Rajputs preferred death to disgrace. According to Tod, the Rajputs performed "that horrible rite, the **Jauhar** where the females are immolated to preserve them from

pollution or captivity. The funeral pyre was lighted within the 'great subterranean retreat', in chambers impervious to the light of day, and the defenders of Chittor beheld in procession the queens, their own wives and daughters, to the number of several thousands . . . They were conveyed to the cavern, and the opening closed upon them, leaving them to find security from dishonour in the devouring element." The fort of Chittor was captured by Ala-ud-Din on 26th August, 1303. The government of Chittor was put in the hands of Khizr Khan, the eldest son of Ala-ud-Din. Chittor was also named as Khizrabad after the name of Khizr Khan. It is to be noted that on account of the pressure of Rajputs, Khizr Khan was forced to leave Chittor in 1311. When this happened, Chittor was given by Ala-ud-Din to Maldeva, the chief of Jalor. Chittor was again recovered by the Rajputs under Hamir or his son and it once again became the capital of Mewar.

### Story of Padmani

A reference may be made to the story of Padmani. It is stated that when the siege of Chittor was going on and a critical situation arose, Ala-ud-Din offered to go away without capturing Chittor if he was shown the face of Padmani through a mirror. Rana Ratan Singh accepted this suggestion and arrangements were made to show Padmani in the mirror. After seeing Padmani through a mirror, the determination of Ala-ud-Din to have Padmani became all the more greater and he made Ratan Singh a prisoner. A message was sent to Padmani that her husband would be released if she agreed to come in the harem of Ala-ud-Din. Padmani sent the reply that she was coming with her attendants. 700 litters said to be carrying her attendants, but actually carrying brave Rajput warriors, entered the camp of Ala-ud-Din and rescued Rana Ratan Singh. Thus, Ala-ud-Din was outwitted. Although Gora and Badal resisted the invaders at the outer gate of the fort of Chittor, they could not stand against the Delhi Army for long and thus Chittor was captured but before its fall, Padmani burnt herself and refused to fall into the hands of the Muslims.

About the story of Padmani, Gauri Shankar Ojha has observed thus "...Col. Tod has written this story on the authority of Bhatts of Mewar, and the Bhatts have taken it from Padmavat . . . . Such being the case, Tod's statement lacks conviction. If there is any basic fact (lit. root ; jad) behind the statement of Tarikhi-Ferishta, Tod and Padmavat, it is this that Ala-ud-Din captured Chittor after a siege of six months, that its ruler Ratan Singh was killed in this fight with Lakshman Singh, and that his queen Padmani died in the fire of Jauhar with several other ladies." Again, ".....In the absence of history people accepted Padmavat as history. But in truth it is only a story in verse, like a modern historical novel, the structure of which rests upon these historical facts that Ratan Sen was the ruler of Chittor, Padmani was his queen, and Ala-ud-Din was the Sultan of Delhi, who wrested the fort of Chittor from Ratan Sen (Ratan Singh) by fighting..." However, Dr. K. R. Qanungo points out in "Studies in Rajput History" that Ojha is not clear on the point that Ratan Singh or Ratan Sen was killed in this fight not with Lakshman Singh

but before. Ala-ud-Din wrested the fort of Chittor not from Ratan Sen but from Lakshman Singh. "Padmani was his (Ratan Sen's) queen" has not been proved by Ojha to be a historical fact and in spite of that Ojha speaks in the indicative mood about the so-called Padmani palace and Padmani tank of Chittor. Dr. Qanungo rejects the story of Padmani as completely unhistorical. However, Dr. A.L. Srivastava points out that those writers who regard the story of Padmani as unhistorical base their arguments on a superficial study of the writings of Amir Khusro. Amir Khusro does make a reference to the story of Padmani when he compares Ala-ud-Din with Solomon. He refers to his Seba as being in the fort of Chittor. Amir Khusro describes himself as Hud-Hud which was the bird which brought the news of Bilquis, the queen of Seba, to Solomon. It is true that Malik Khusro has omitted many things which might have been disliked by his master Ala-ud-Din such as the murder of Jalal-ud-Din by Ala-ud-Din but it is too much to believe that the whole story of Padmani was concocted by Jayasi. It cannot be denied that Jayasi derived the main story of his Padmavat from **Khazain-ul-Futuh** of Amir Khusro. The details of romance of Jayasi's Padmavat may be imaginary but the main plot is most probably based on historical truth. Had there been no truth in the story, the Rajput bards would never have included it in their traditional songs, particularly when the whole story is a slur on the honour of the Rajputs.

The view of Dr. K. S. Lal is that the stories of Ferishta, Hajiuddabir and other later Persian historians and the bards of Rajputana, except in certain minor variations, closely resemble one another and seem to have been drawn upon the Padmavat of Jaisi. However, it is doubtful whether even Jaisi, while writing the Padmavat, ever meant to write about the life story of a princess of Chittor. At the end of his epic, Jaisi says : "In this epic, Chittor stands for the body, the Raja for the mind, Singhaldvip (Ceylon) for the heart, Padmani for wisdom....., and Sultan Ala-ud-Din for lust (Maya). The wise can understand what is meant by this love story." From this remark of Jaisi, Dr. K. S. Lal has come to the conclusion that Jaisi was writing an allegory and not narrating a true historical event. It may be that the selection of this particular theme may have been inspired by the tragic Jauhar of Chittor in Jaisi's own times when Bahadur Shah of Gujarat invaded Chittor in the year 1534. Once Jaisi had written the romantic story, the Mohammadan historians of India who not infrequently copied verbatim from the Persian histories also, adopted this story in extenso. The Padmavat was completed 224 years after the death of Ala-ud-Din and 237 years after the eventful siege of Chittor, and not a single historian or chronicler, Persian or Rajasthani, ever wrote about Padmani before the Padmavat of Jaisi.

Dr. K. S. Lal points out that there is one fact which causes some hesitation in rejecting the story altogether. The Mewar tradition which accepts the story is a very old one, handed down from generation to generation and if Padmani's episode was a mere literary concoction, it should not have gained so wide a currency in



Rajputana. However, the answer of Dr. K. S. Lal is that tradition is not a very authentic source of history and it is not easy to say how old the Mewar tradition is, and whether it is older than the Padmavat of Jaisi. The bardic chronicles were written long after the completion of the Padmavat and even Ferishta's Tarikh, and it cannot be said with certainty whether the bards based their accounts of Padmani on oral tradition or on the Padmavat itself. It is probable that Jaisi may have struck at the plot of Padmavat from the terrible battle of Chittor just as Charles Dickens struck at the plot of 'A Tale of Two Cities' from the extraordinary times of the French Revolution. Regarding the wide currency it gained in Rajputana, the answer is that once such stories are in the air they are repeated everywhere with added incidents and suggestions. The romantic story of Padmani got so much currency in India that not only Ferishta and Haji-uddabir but even Manucci relates its incidents in connection with Akbar's invasion of Chittor and says that Padmani was the queen of Raja Jaimal who was rescued from royal imprisonment through the stratagem of litters. Against these confused and varied accounts is the testimony of the contemporary historians, poets and travellers, who never alluded to Padmani affair at all. All these historians and chroniclers cannot be accused of deliberately entering into a conspiracy of silence on the Chittor episode. Amir Khusru who accompanied the Sultan to Chittor has very fearlessly and even exaggeratingly given the details relating to the siege. How can it be said that such an incident as that of Padmani, if it really happened, escaped mention from his pen? The story of Padmani is to be found in Jaisi's Padmavat, in traditional lore, and in those chronicles the accounts of which have borrowed it from the Padmavat and the traditions. Tradition is no doubt a source of history but it is surely the weakest one, and until it is corroborated by contemporary evidence—literary, historical, epigraphical and numismatical—it cannot be accepted as true history. In the case of Padmani the antiquity of the tradition which furnishes the story is not known, while the story itself is a long one. But it cannot be accepted simply because it was so popular and for so long a time. To say that where so much is alleged, something must be true is not the historian's habit. (*History of the Khaljis*, pp. 107-110)

### Malwa

In 1305, Ala-ud-Din sent an army to Malwa under Ain-ul-Mulk Multani. Rai Mahlak Deva of Malwa and his Pradhan, Koka, opposed the army but they were defeated and slain in November or December 1305. The victory helped the Muslims to occupy Ujjain, Mandu, Dhar and Chanderi. Ain-ul-Mulk was appointed the Governor of Malwa.

### Jalor

Raja Kanera Deva of Jalor also submitted and acknowledged the suzerainty of Ala-ud-Din. In spite of this submission, Kanera Deva boasted that he was prepared to meet Ala-ud-Din in the battlefield at any time. When this fact was brought to the notice of Ala-ud-Din, he got annoyed and sent an army against him under



Gul-i-Bihisht, a female servant of his palace. Jalor was besieged and when Kanera Deva was about to surrender, she died. Her son was defeated and killed by the Rajputs. When fresh troops came from Delhi, Kanera Deva was defeated and he and his relations were put to death and Jalor was annexed.

In 1308, Ala-ud-Din himself left with a large army to attack Sevana in Rajputana. Its ruler, Sital Deva, put up a stiff resistance but was defeated, captured and killed. His kingdom was placed under the charge of Malik Kamal-ud-Din Gurg.

Almost all the important states of Rajputana submitted before Ala-ud-Din. The question has been asked as to what were the causes which were responsible for the defeat of the Rajputs and many reasons have been given. The Rajputs were disunited politically. It is true that every Rajput kingdom put up a stiff resistance, but singly none of them was a match for the Sultan of Delhi. Their disunity helped the Sultan. Reference may be made in this connection to the case of Sevana and Jalor. While the fall of Sevana was imminent, the ruler of Jalor, a neighbour, kept aloof. The result was that after the conquest of Sevana, Jalor was also conquered.

Another cause of the defeat of the Rajputs was their reliance on their forts. These forts were usually constructed on the top of some hillocks as a measure of defence. However, once a fort was besieged, it was cut off from the plains and provisions could not reach it. Sanitary condition inside the forts were not satisfactory. That was particularly so during a siege when forts became over-crowded and epidemics often took a heavy toll of life.

Another cause of the failure of the Rajputs was that they continued to follow the age-long traditions of warfare. They did not bother about the new techniques of fighting evolved in other parts of the world. The Sultans possessed engines of war like Arrada, Gargach etc., (i.e., stone-throwing machines). They also knew the art of constructing pashibs for escalading the fort walls. The Rajputs fought with elephants in open engagements. They thought it below their dignity to resort to ambushade, camoufflage and feigning retreats in which the Turks were experts.

Another cause of the defeat of the Rajputs was that their resources were limited. Their country was hilly and barren. Crops and water were scarce. They could not fight successfully against the Sultans of Delhi who had at their command the resources of the Punjab and Avadh which were the most fertile regions of the country and thus could depend upon an unlimited supply of provisions and reinforcements.

### **Conquest of the Deccan**

By the end of 1305, practically the whole of Northern India fell into the hands of Ala-ud-Din and he could very easily afford to direct his attention towards the conquest of the Deccan. There must have been both political and economic motives behind the campaigns of Ala-ud-Din and his lieutenants in the South. The wealth of the Deccan was too tempting to an enterprising adventurer. His ambition

to establish his control over the South which had so far not been conquered by the Muslims, must have led Ala-ud-Din to think of conquering Southern India. The political condition in the South was also favourable to Ala-ud-Din. There were four kingdoms in that region at that time. The first was the Yadava kingdom of Devagiri under Ram Chandra Deva (1271-1309). Telingana with its capital at Warangal was under Pratap Rudra Deva I of the Kakatiya dynasty. The Hoysala kingdom with its capital at Dwarsamudra was under its ruler Vira Ballala III (1292-1342). The Pandya kingdom of Madura was being ruled at that time by Maravarman Kulasekhara (1268-1311). There were some minor rulers like Manma Siddha ruling in the Nellore district, Bhanu-Deva ruling in Orissa. Ravi-Varman ruling from Kollam and Banki-Deva-Alupendra ruling from Mangalore. The Hindu rulers of the South were quarrelling among themselves and consequently they were not in a position to put up a united front. No wonder, they were disposed of one by one.

### **Conquest of Devagiri**

In March 1307, Ala-ud-Din sent an expedition under Malik Kafur against Ram Chandra Deva of Devagiri. The latter had not sent the tribute for the last three years and also given refuge to Rai Karan Deva, the fugitive ruler of Gujarat. Malik Kafur was also asked to bring with him Deval Devi, daughter of Kamla Devi, who had escaped at the time of the conquest of Gujarat. It is stated that Karan Deva II had made arrangement to marry Deval Devi to a Prince named Shankar who was the eldest son of Ram Chandra Deva of Devagiri. When she was being escorted towards Devagiri, she fell into the hands of Alp Khan, Governor of Gujarat, who was going to join Malik Kafur in his expedition against Devagiri. Deval Devi was sent to Delhi and was married to Khizr Khan, the eldest son of Ala-ud-Din. Malik Kafur marched through Malwa and advanced to Devagiri. He destroyed the whole country and captured a lot of booty. Ram Chandra was forced to sue for peace. He was sent to Delhi where he was treated kindly by Ala-ud-Din. He was sent back to his kingdom after six months. Ram Chandra Deva continued to rule Devagiri as a vassal of Ala-ud-Din.

### **Telingana**

As regards Telingana, an attempt had been made in 1303 to capture Warangal but that had failed. Another attempt was made in 1307 by Ala-ud-Din to bring Telingana under his control. Ala-ud-Din had no desire to annex Telingana and his only object seems to have been to get the wealth of that kingdom and also force its ruler to acknowledge his authority. Ala-ud-Din is said to have given the following instructions to Malik Kafur who was in charge of the expedition: "If the Rai consented to surrender his treasure and jewels, elephants and horses, and also to send treasure and elephants in the following year, Malik Naib Kafur was to accept these terms and not to press the Rai too hard." The Delhi army marched via Devagiri and was given all assistance by Rama Chandra Deva. Partap Rudra Deva, the ruler of Telingana, put up a stiff resistance. The

fort of Warangal was besieged. When the situation became critical, Pratap Rudra Deva sued for peace in March 1310. The Raja gave Kafur 100 elephants, 7,000 horses and large quantities of jewels and coined money. He also agreed to send tribute to Delhi every year. Amir Khusrô tells us that Malik Kafur came back to Delhi with an immense booty carried "on a thousand camels groaning under the weight of treasure."

### Dwarsamudra

The next expedition was against Vira Ballala III, the Hoysala ruler. The latter was taken by surprise and defeated. His capital, Dwarsamudra, was captured. Malik Kafur plundered the rich temples of the town and got a lot of gold, silver, jewels and pearls. He sent to Delhi all the captured property and also the Hoysala Prince. The prince came back to Dwarsamudra in May 1313 but the Hoysalas became the vassals of Delhi.

### Pandya Kingdom

From Dwarsamudra, Kafur marched against the Pandya kingdom. At that time, there was going on a dispute for succession to the throne between two brothers, Sundara Pandya and Vira Pandya. Sundara Pandya was defeated by Vira Pandya. The former went to Delhi and asked for the help of Ala-ud-Din. That was exactly the thing that Ala-ud-Din would like to have. No wonder, Malik Kafur reached Madura which was abandoned by Vira Pandya. Malik Kafur plundered Madura and destroyed its temples. He then reached Rameshwaram on the island of Pamban. At Rameshwaram, he destroyed the great temple and built a mosque and named it after his master, Ala-ud-Din.<sup>1</sup> He came back to Delhi in 1311 with rich spoils "which included 312 elephants, 20,000 horses, 2,750 pounds of gold, equal in value to ten

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1. There is a controversy among the scholars about the question whether Malik Kafur actually raided Rameshwaram or merely marched as far as the southern coast. Writing in 1900, Sewell was the first scholar to doubt the possibility of Malik Kafur's invasion of Rameshwaram. In 1921, Dr. Krishna-swamy Aiyangar discussed the question in his book "South India and Her Muhammadan Invaders" and came to the conclusion that Malik Kafur carried his raids from Madura as far south as Rameshwaram. Sir Wolsely Haig, in the Cambridge History of India, Vol. III, says that Malik Kafur marched to the southern coast and built a mosque either at Rameshwaram or on the mainland opposite to it. Dr. Venkaramanyya in his "Early Muslim Expansion in South India" and Dr. K. S. Lal in "History of the Khaljis" have expressed the opinion that Malik Kafur did not raid Rameshwaram but retraced his steps from Madura. Dr. Derrett in "The Hoysalas" expressed his opinion in 1957 that Malik Kafur built a mosque at Rameshwaram.

The view of Dr. Sukumar Ray is that Malik Kafur advanced as far as Rameshwaram and raided its temple, even if we cannot be sure of the identification of Amir Khusrô's Patan with Rameshwaram. Haji Dabir vaguely refers to this in "Embellished form" when he refers to Malik Kafur's march to Ceylon and demolishing a temple there. A raid from Madura to Rameshwaram was not quite impracticable when the great invader had marched a long way from Delhi. If Malik Kafur could not have found time to build a mosque there, the possibility of a raid could not be ruled out altogether.



crores of Tankas and chests of jewels. No such booty had ever before been brought to Delhi." The result of this expedition was that the Pandya kingdom became a dependency of the Delhi Sultanate and continued to be so till the early part of reign of Muhammad Tughlak.

### Devagiri

The last Deccan campaign of Malik Kafur was against Shankar Deva who withheld the tribute promised by his father and tried to regain his independence. Malik Kafur marched against Devagiri and inflicted a crushing defeat on Shankar Deva. The latter was killed. Most of the towns of his kingdom were captured and looted. It was in this way that the whole of Southern India was made to acknowledge the sway of Ala-ud-Din.

The success of Ala-ud-Din in the Deccan can be attributed to many causes. The kingdoms of the South were constantly fighting against one another and hence could not present a united front to the armies of the North. When Ala-ud-Din attacked Devagiri in 1296, Singhana Deva had gone towards the Hoysala frontiers with his forces. When Malik Kafur marched against the Hoysala country, its ruler Ballala Deva was absent in farther South trying to snatch a portion of the Pandya territory. Sundara Pandya and Vira Pandya were the deadly enemies of each other.

The rulers of the Southern states also helped the invaders against one another. Ram Chandra helped Malik Kafur in the conquest of Telingana. Vira Ballala escorted the imperial army farther South in Malabar. Sundara Pandya asked Malik Kafur to help him against his step-brother Vira Pandya. The consequences of such a policy were obvious and no wonder the Southern states were defeated.

Another cause of the success of the armies of Ala-ud-Din was their efficiency. The mobility of their cavalry was staggering. It is pointed out that the distance between Delhi and Devagiri was almost annihilated on account of the speed of the horses. Before the Southern states could find time to get ready for meeting the invasion, they were attacked all of a sudden and defeated.

The soldiers from the North combined in themselves the zeal for religion and greed for plunder. They were superior to the Southern soldiers in discipline, strategy and tactics. Referring to the soldiers of South India, Marco Polo says: "The people of the country go to the battle all naked, with only a lance and a shield and are the most wretched soldiers." Marco Polo also points out that they were mostly vegetarians and very orthodox people. They were more particular about their regular baths and untouchability than about fighting. It is obvious that such people could not fight against the armies from the North. No wonder, the armies of Ala-ud-Din were successful in the South.

As regards the Deccan policy of Ala-ud-Din, it is to be noted that like Samudra Gupta, Ala-ud-Din did not intend to annex the territory of the rulers of Southern India. His main object was to



get as much of wealth as possible so that he could pay for the expenses of a huge army which he was maintaining. According to Dr. Aiyangar, Ala-ud-Din regarded the Deccan as a milch-cow for the gold that he required to stabilise his position in the North. Ala-ud-Din sent Malik Kafur four times to the South not to conquer it but to get its gold, silver, pearls, jewels and elephants. Ala-ud-Din also had no religious motive in his wars against the Southern states. There were no wholesale conversions. Even the rulers of the Deccan states were not forced to change their religion. It is true that temples were demolished by Kafur in his Deccan campaigns but that was done more for economic than for any religious purpose. It is true that some mosques were built but there does not seem to have been any religious motive behind them. Their object was merely to commemorate his brilliant victories. The successful Deccan campaigns must have strengthened the position of Ala-ud-Din in the North. No ruler or governor could dare to defy Ala-ud-Din. The wealth of the South must have improved the financial position of Ala-ud-Din and helped him in his administration of the country. It is also pointed out that the expeditions of Malik Kafur which were accompanied by the sack of cities, slaughter of the people and plunder of temples, must have made an immense impression on the people of the South. They could not resist him and hence submitted before him but they harboured a feeling of discontentment in their hearts and that ultimately found expression in the Vijayanagar Empire.

### Death

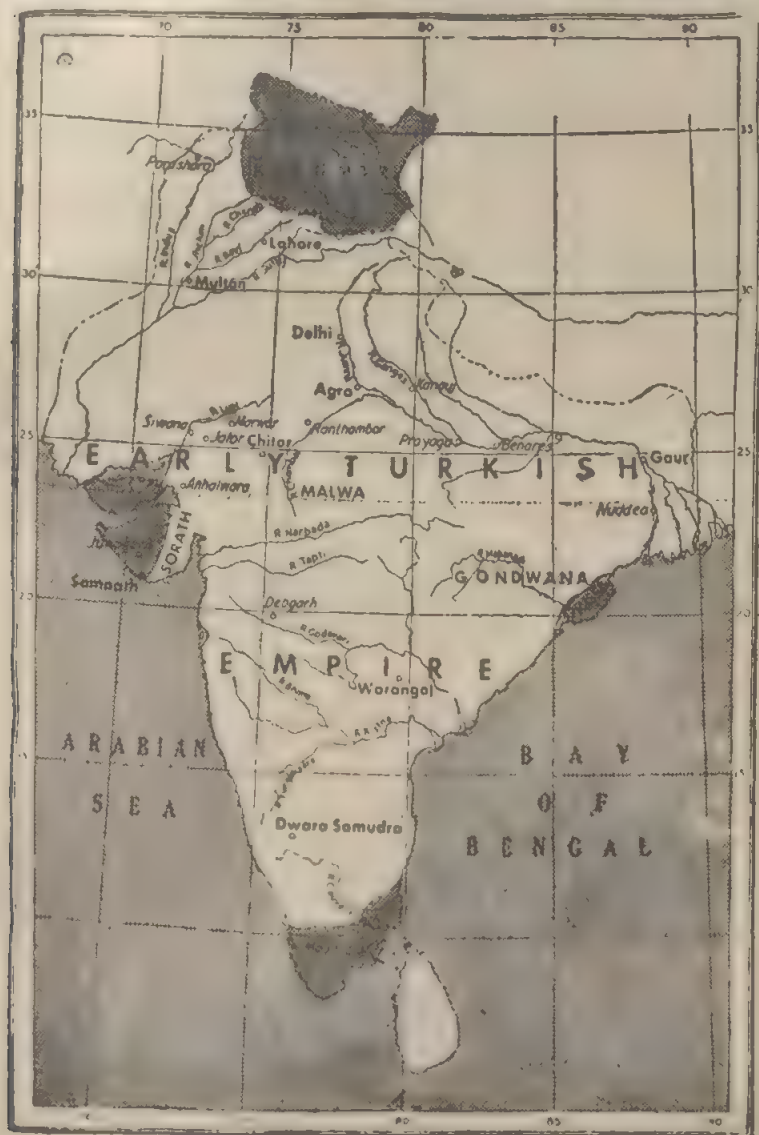
The twenty years' rule of Ala-ud-Din came to an end with his death on 2nd January, 1316. The Sultan was not keeping good health. "His ill-health made him more suspicious and irritable than ever; and like most people who distrust the bulk of mankind, he was the dupe of one artful individual." So great was the influence of Malik Kafur on Ala-ud-Din that the latter imprisoned Khizr Khan, his eldest son and his mother on a charge of conspiracy. Shihab-ud-Umar was nominated successor so that Malik Kafur, acting as regent, could exercise all the powers. Rebellions broke out on all sides. Harapala, the successor of Shankar Deva in Devagiri, was the first to declare his independence and drive out the Muslim garrisons from his territory. Rana Hamir of Chittor turned out the Muslims from Rajasthan. Gujarat also followed suit. According to Elphinstone, "The paroxysms of rage produced by a succession of these tidings increased the king's suffering and soon brought him to the brink of the grave. His end is said to have been accelerated by poison, administered by Kafur."

It is rightly pointed out that Ala-ud-Din was a great administrative genius. No Muslim ruler before the Mughals had shown so much of interest in organizing the affairs of the state. He made a large number of reforms in various spheres of administration some of which were really original.

### Conception of Kingship

In his conception of sovereignty, Ala-ud-Din departed from his

predecessors. He had the courage to say that he was not prepared to be dictated by the Ulema. Qazi Mughis-ud-Din of Biyana used



to visit the court very often and he was an advocate of the supremacy of the Church. However, Ala-ud-Din told him his views about kingship in these words: "To prevent rebellion, in which thousands perish, I issue such orders as I conceive to be for the good of the state and the benefit of the people. Men are heedless, disrespectful and disobey my commands; I am then compelled to be severe to

bring them into obedience. I do not know whether this is lawful or unlawful ; whatever I think to be for the good of the state or suitable for the emergency, that I decree ; and as for what may happen to me on the Day of Judgment, that I know not." However, this does not mean that he disregarded Islam. Outside India, he was known as a great defender of Islam. In the case of India, there is a difference of opinion. Barani and his followers emphasized the disregard of religion by Ala-ud-Din but Amir Khusru considered Ala-ud-Din as a supporter of Islam. Ala-ud-Din himself is said to have told the Qazi : "Although I have not studied the Science or the Book, I am a Mussalman of a Mussalman stock." The inscriptions on the monuments of Ala-ud-Din also show that Ala-ud-Din had faith in Islam.

Ala-ud-Din revived the theory of kingship of Balban. He believed in the majesty of the king who was the representative of God on earth. His conviction was that God had given more wisdom to the king than to any other individual and his will should be the law of the country. He also believed that kingship knows no kinship. All people were to be either his servants or his subjects and he was not to be influenced by anybody in the administration of the country. Both the nobles and the Ulema were to be kept at a distance. He inspired awe among all. He would like to rule over the country according to his own lights. He did not consider it necessary to get the sanction of the Khalifa to add to his authority and no wonder he did not apply for an investiture from the Khalifa. However, he styled himself as **Yamin-ul-Khilafat Nasiri Amir-ul-Mumanin**.

### His Militarism

Ala-ud-Din established a militaristic regime. He based his kingship on military power and force. He did not claim sovereignty on the basis of heredity or election by the nobles or the sanction of the Khalifa. He knew full well that he had usurped power by force and the same could be maintained only by force. He subordinated the Muslim Church by force. He overawed the nobility with his huge army. He did not allow the nobles to keep their armies. As a matter of fact, he owed everything to his efficient army. It is not possible to refer to the exact figures of the army of Ala-ud-Din. Ferishta tells us that Ala-ud-Din maintained 475,000 horsemen. He paid decent salaries to the soldiers. Muratab or an ordinary horseman was paid 234 Tankas a year. The Sawar was paid 156 Tankas. A Do-aspah was paid 78 Tankas a year. Payments were made to the soldiers regularly and their activities were also supervised. Ala-ud-Din introduced the system of **Dagh** or the branding of horses and **Huliah** system or the preparation of the descriptive rolls. Dewan-i-Arz was the head of the military establishment and was required to enforce the rules stringently. The result of these changes was that the Sultan could not be deceived by clever nobles with regard to the identity of the horses and the soldiers. Spies were kept in every unit of the army and they were required to submit daily reports to the Sultan regarding the conduct of the military officers.

## Land Revenue

Ala-ud-Din made many reforms in the field of land revenue. It was ordered that all land was to be measured and then the share of the state was to be fixed. The post of a special officer called **Mustakhraj** was created and he was given the duty of collecting unrealised balance of land revenue from the peasants. In order to check bribery and corruption among the revenue officials, their salaries were increased. On certain occasions, the papers of the Patwaris were personally scrutinized. Ala-ud-Din did not force the peasants to pay land revenue in cash. As a matter of fact, he preferred to get the same in kind.

Zia-Barani has criticised Ala-ud-Din for heavy taxes. The latter charged half the produce as land revenue while the demand of the state used to be 25% or 33% before Ala-ud-Din. That was probably due to the fact that Ala-ud-Din was in need of a larger amount of money for the maintenance of his army. At the same time, it is not to be forgotten that Ala-ud-Din took steps to safeguard the peasants from the demands of the corrupt revenue officials and the latter were punished severely even for petty offences. It is pointed out that for misappropriation of one single Jital, the revenue collectors were tortured.

The condition of the revenue officials became very bad in the time of Ala-ud-Din. We are told that the wives of the Khuts and Muqaddams went and served for hire in the houses of Mussalmans. "Men looked upon revenue officers as something worse than fever. Clerkship was a great crime and no man would give his daughter to a clerk."

## Treatment of the Hindus

Ala-ud-Din was very cruel towards the Hindus. He adopted all kinds of measures to crush them in every possible manner. The Qazi of Bayana explained the policy of the state towards the Hindus and Ala-ud-Din followed the same. According to the Qazi, the Hindus are called **Khiraj-guzars** and when the revenue officer demands silver from them, they should without question and with all humility and respect, tender gold. If the Muhassil chooses to spit into the mouth of a Hindu, the latter must open his mouth without hesitation.....The meaning of doing such a thing is that the Hindu by acting in this way shows his meekness and humility and obedience and respect. The glorification of Islam is a duty, and contempt of the religion is vain. God himself has commanded their subjection, in as much as the Hindus are the deadliest foes of the Prophet. The Prophet has said that they should either embrace Islam or they should be slain or enslaved, and their property should be confiscated to the state. No one except the great doctor Abu Hanifa allows the imposition of the Jizya upon the Hindus, while other schools are of opinion that there is no other alternative for them but death or Islam."

Ala-ud-Din adopted many measures by which the Hindus were reduced to poverty and misery. Zia ud-Din Barani tells us that the



Chaudhries, Khuts and Muqaddams were not able to ride on horse-back, to find weapons, to get fine clothes or to indulge in betel. Their wives were forced to work as maid-servants in the houses of the Muslim neighbours. According to Prof. S. R. Sharma, the choice offered by Ala-ud-Din to the Hindus was to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, the helots of the Empire. No wonder, Ala-ud-Din boasted that "at my command, they are ready to creep into holes like mice."

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "Hindus throughout the kingdom were reduced to one dead level of poverty and misery, or, if there were one class more to be pitied than another, it was that which had formerly enjoyed the most esteem, the hereditary assessors and collectors of the revenue."

However, Dr. R. P. Tripathi contends that the measures adopted against the Hindus by Ala-ud-Din were not due to religious causes but to political and economic causes. The Muqaddams or village headmen, Khuts or farmers of revenue and Chaudhries or revenue collectors were mainly Hindus and before the time of Ala-ud-Din, they had enjoyed many privileges. They dressed themselves daintily. They rode on fine horses. They oppressed the cultivators. All that Ala-ud-Din did was that he merely withdrew all the concessions which formerly the revenue officials enjoyed even in the reigns of the Muslim rulers. This did not prove that "Ala-ud-Din specially aimed at crippling the Hindus as such."

### Measures against Nobility

Ala-ud-Din believed in the establishment of a strong government at the centre. That was not possible if certain elements in the country continued to revolt. It is true that Ala-ud-Din had successfully crushed the rebellions of Akat Khan, the revolt of the sons of the sister of the Sultan, Amir Umar and Mangu Khan, in Badaun and Avadh, the conspiracy of Haji Maula and the plots of the New Mussalmans, but all this made Ala-ud-Din analyse the causes of those rebellions. His conclusion was that those rebellions were due to the inefficiency of the spy system, the general practice of using wine, social intercourse among nobles and intermarriages between them and the excess of wealth in the hands of a few persons "which engenders evil and strife, and brings forth pride and disloyalty."

In order to avoid the evils mentioned above, Ala-ud-Din issued four important Ordinances. The first Ordinance aimed at the confiscation of the religious endowments and free grants of land. Zia-ud-Din Barani tells us that "the Sultan ordered that wherever there was a village held by proprietary right (*milk*) in free gift (*in'am*), or as a religious endowment (*wakf*), it should by one stroke of the pen be brought under the exchequer. The people were pressed and amerced and money was exacted from them on every kind of pretext. Many were left without any money, till at length it came to pass that excepting Maliks and Amirs, officials, Multanis, (i.e., large traders from Multan) and bankers, no one possessed even a trifle in cash. So rigorous was the confiscation that, beyond a few thousand tankas, all

the pensions, grants in land, and endowments in the country were appropriated. The people were all so absorbed in obtaining the means of living that the very name of rebellion was never mentioned."

By the second Ordinance, Ala-ud-Din re-organised the spy system. An army of informers was created and their duty was to spy on all that happened in the Empire and submit reports to the Sultan. Spies were required to work in the army. Spies were appointed in the markets. Spies were appointed in the Provinces. Spies were required not to delay the sending of any report for more than 24 hours. The spy system of Ala-ud-Din was so very efficient that they "often in their zeal to win royal favour carried the silly gossip of the bazar to the ears of the Emperor."

The third Ordinance prohibited the use of wine. In order to set an example, Ala-ud-Din himself brought all the jars and casks of wine from his palace and got them emptied at the Badaun Gate. So much of wine was emptied that mud and mire were produced as in the rainy season.

The prohibition scheme was not a success. People began to distil wine in private houses. Smuggling became common. The result was that certain concessions were made by the Sultan. The prohibition was restricted merely to its public use and convivial gatherings. Nobles were allowed to drink individually in their houses.

The fourth Ordinance issued by Ala-ud-Din laid down that nobles should not have social gatherings and they should not intermarry without his permission. No dinners and parties could be given by the nobles without the prior sanction of the Sultan. Gambling even for recreation was prohibited. Dr Ishwari Prasad rightly points out that "the amenities of social life disappeared and life became an intolerable burden."

### **Economic Reforms**

Ala-ud-Din carried out a large number of reforms in the economic field. Certain regulations were issued with the object of fixing prices of food products, cloth and all kinds of piece goods and maid-servants, concubines, male and female slaves, milch cattle, beasts of burden, horses and various articles of general merchandise including such articles as bread, vegetables, **Reori**, **Yakhni**, needles, etc. Other regulations were concerned with the ways and means of enforcing the prices fixed. It was the duty of the government to ensure supplies by means of command. The hoarding of produce of the Doab and the neighbouring country up to a distance of hundred Kos, was prohibited. Merchants were commandeered to transport grains from villages to Delhi. Grain was to be stored in government granaries. A machinery was devised to coerce the people to obey the regulations. The government was to see that the fixed price level was not disturbed even in times of famines which were frequent in those days. There was to be strict rationing in times of famines. The revenue of the territory near Delhi was so regulated that neither the farmers were able to retain any surplus nor secretly sell at a higher

price to the merchants and grain-dealers. Written agreements were taken from the Governor (Nawab) and other government officials that no one within their jurisdiction would be allowed to hoard and regrate corn. If any case of regrating was detected, the officers were to be held liable for it and punished. Shahnas (Superintendents) and Karkunan (Agents) were required to be guarantees that they would cause the grain from the farmers to be delivered to the caravans of merchants on the fields at the fixed rates. The collectors, overseers and other revenue officers were required to realise revenues in the Doab with so much of strictness that the farmers were to be compelled to sell the corn left with them at the cheaper rates to the corn-carriers. These steps were intended to secure the regular flow of grains to markets of Delhi through the caravans at the fixed rates. Merchants and caravans were ordered to carry grain from the villages of the Doab to Delhi. Merchants and caravans from far and near were commandeered and were required to render service to the state under pain of terrible punishment and humiliation. These merchants were required to shift with all their belongings and settle near Delhi on the banks of the river Jumuna in order to be within easy reach of the Shahna or Superintendent of the Market. As regards the storing of grains in government granaries set up for the purpose in all parts of Delhi, those were filled chiefly with grain collected by way of revenue from the Khalsa villages of the Doab and those attached to the New City (Shahr-i-Nau). In addition to Delhi, granaries were set up at Jhain and its villages. The corn collected at Jhain and its villages could not be sold in the countryside and had to be transported to Delhi by the caravans. It is possible that Jhain was at that time a big grain market. The storage was meant for emergencies and for times of scarcity and famine. On those occasions, the supply of corn to the people of Delhi was rationed at a maximum of half a Man per family per day. Special consideration was required to be shown to the poor and if the Shahna did not do so, he was punished.

Shahna or Superintendent or Inspector of Market was appointed. He was given a contingent of cavalry and infantry and a suitable Jagir for his maintenance. He was given a Barid and other officers to help him in his work. Malik Maqbul, a servant of Ulugh Khan, was appointed Shahna. His duty was to supervise the market and also compel the merchants and caravans to collect grain from the villages. The maintenance of the official price scale must have been a difficult task. A huge official machinery was required for the purpose. Prices at the source of commodities had to be kept down at a sufficiently low level to meet the demands of the government. Caravans and merchants had to be kept under control so that they might bring regularly goods to Delhi without regrating any portion elsewhere. Cheating on the part of sellers and corruption by government officials had to be checked. Ala-ud-Din ordered that daily reports of the current prices of the market should be sent to him by the Shahna, Barid and the informers of the courts independently of each other and if those reports did not tally, the guilty officer was to be punished. Zia ud-Din Barani tells us that although harsh punish-



ments were given to the shopkeepers, they did not hesitate to cheat and give short measures to the purchasers. Ala-ud-Din used to make enquiries about the rates ten to twenty times a day and in spite of that cheating did not stop. Ala-ud-Din adopted the method of sending occasionally to the market a few slave boys to buy articles of food and if those were found to be less than the correct weight, a quantity of flesh equal to the deficiency was cut from the cheeks or haunches of the seller and he was also kicked out of his shop by Shahna-i-Mandi.

Ala-ud-Din issued certain regulations under which a new government market named **Sarai-Adl** was established under the Badaun Gate. Merchants of Delhi and other provinces were required to be registered. Loans were advanced to the Multani merchants and they were given charge of the Sarai-Adl market. Passes were issued to those rich persons who wanted to buy costly goods. All merchants were required to hand over their entire stocks into Sarai Adl on pain of severe punishment for concealing anything. The Diwan-i-Riyasat was ordered to register the names of merchants whether they were Hindus or Muslims. These merchants were required to bring all the commodities to the city and sell them at the control rates. They must have suffered a lot unless the government compensated them for the same. The brokers and horse-dealers, who used to earn a lot, were ruined.

Ala-ud-Din appointed Yaqub as Diwan-i-Riyasat. Under him a Shahna-i-Mandi was appointed with a huge staff of subordinates. Only those persons were appointed who were not only honest and trustworthy but also harsh and cruel. The Shahna-i-Mandi was supplied with a schedule of control rates and was required to keep an eye on all sales in the market. If there was any deficiency in weight, the seller was lashed mercilessly and ill-treated in every possible way.

Zia-ud-Din Barani attributes the success of the measures adopted by Ala-ud-Din to various factors and those were the strict enforcement of the rules of the market, vigorous collection of the taxes, scarcity of metallic currency among the people and the zeal of the officers who acted honestly out of fear of the Sultan.

There is a difference of opinion amongst scholars regarding the object of the economic reforms carried out by Ala-ud-Din. There are some who contend that Ala-ud-Din felt that it was the duty of the state to look after the economic welfare of the people. Like Napoleon, Ala-ud-Din was of the view that the supreme talisman of statesmanship lay in cheap bread. While Ala-ud-Din robbed the rich, he compensated the poor. He increased the salaries of the low-paid officials and by fixing the prices of the necessities of life low, he added to their happiness. Lane Poole calls Ala-ud-Din a great political economist.

However, this view is not accepted by Dr. P. Saran. His view is that the problem of maintaining a huge army with the limited resources of the kingdom was the sole motive which prompted the control of prices of all necessities of life so as to make them cheap



enough for the soldiers to maintain themselves on the low salaries which were paid to them. The amelioration of the condition of the poor was not even in the remotest imagination of Ala-ud-Din. Dr. Saran also points out that Ala-ud-Din's system was confined to Delhi and its neighbourhood. The rest of his dominion had directly nothing to do with it although the districts immediately surrounding Delhi must have been influenced by the regulations. The economic life and the business conditions of the surrounding country became chaotic. Dr. Saran is of the opinion that the system set up by Ala-ud-Din was thoroughly irrational, ill conceived and artificial being in flagrant violation of all economic laws, intended primarily for the benefit of the government and resulting in incalculable misery, poverty and humiliation to the people who happened to fall directly or indirectly under it. The king, the army and government servants and other salaried people gained from price control as they were merely consumers. Merchants and businessmen, being both consumers and sellers, got relief as they were able to get their requirements at cheaper rates. The agriculturists were the most hard hit as they had very little to buy other articles. They could not take advantage of the amenities provided at Delhi.

Dr. K. S. Lal expresses his view in these words : "Ala-ud-din's passion for incessant conquest and constant invasions of the Mongol free-booters from the north-west had rendered maintenance of a large army unavoidable. Besides the army, the expenses on a large staff of State officials on civil and military administration and on slaves involved heavy liabilities on the royal exchequer. The wealth accumulated in the time of Sultan Jalaluddin, the treasures secured from the raid on Devagiri in 1296 and the yearly tributes collected from the various provinces and dependencies of the Empire proved insufficient to meet the financial burden. Even the raising of the revenue to fifty per cent of the produce, the levying of different kinds of cesses, and the conversion of the drinking vessels of gold and silver into coins failed to meet the requirements of the State. It was calculated that if the King recruited a large number of troops even on a moderate salary, the entire treasure of the State would be exhausted within five or six years. Ala-ud-Din, therefore, decided to cut down the salaries of soldiers ; but to prevent their falling a victim to economic distress, he also decided to reduce the prices of commodities of daily use. It was simple arithmetical calculation and simple economic principle ; since he had decided to reduce and fix the salary of soldiers, he also decided to reduce and fix the prices of things of common use. With this end in view, he promulgated various regulations which brought down the cost of living. These measures, which may be termed as his Economic Reforms or his Market Control, form a conspicuous feature of his administration." (*History of the Khaljis*, p. 197)

According to Principal Sri Ram Sharma, the system of Ala-ud-Din "must have come to an end much before his own end came. It failed because it could not perpetuate itself. It failed, as it was bound to fail, because it was not founded on anything except fear. It failed because it failed to gain any loyal supporters." (*Indian*

**History Congress, Proceedings of the Eighteenth Session, Calcutta, 1955, page 147).**

About the economic measures of Ala-ud Din, Dr. K. S. Lal points out that neither agriculture nor trade and commerce, could flourish under the circumstances created by them and that also was not the aim of Ala-ud-Din. The one object he had in his mind was to maintain a large army which was sufficient to repel the Mongol invasion and also to subdue the independent Chiefs of India. It is true that the benefits of the market regulations were enjoyed both by the civil and military population of Delhi but the agriculturists of the Doab and the tracts in the vicinity of Delhi had to pay heavily for the benefits of the people of Delhi. The tradesmen also did not gain much as they had to work under compulsion. Like other Emperors Ala-ud-Din was not bothered about all those considerations. To him, his military necessity was paramount. He wanted a strong army to defeat his enemies and he succeeded remarkably well in that endeavour.

Dr. K. S. Lal rightly observes that the market regulations of Ala-ud-Din died with him. His successor was more fond of concubines than of conquests. Moreover, a very large army was not required as the Mongol storm had subsided. There was no need of controlling prices for recruiting a large army on a small salary. Market control was a temporary measure, resorted to in a state of exigency and when the emergency was over, the regulations were allowed to fall into disuse. (*History of the Khaljis*, Pp. 223-25)

### **Estimate of Ala-ud-Din**

According to Prof. S. R. Sharma, "Ala-ud-Din Khalji was the first Muslim Emperor of India. During the reign, for the first time, the Crescent dominated over the whole country from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from sea to sea. He was also the first Muslim ruler of India to make a bold experiment in administration. Balban had done little beyond consolidating his kingdom and maintaining order therein. What little of government there was, under the greatest of the Slave Sultans, was of a primitive character. Suppression of rebellion, eradication of robbery, and defence of the realm against foreign invaders were the primary tasks which absorbed all energies of Balban. Ala-ud-Din no doubt reaped all the benefits of this most essential spade-work. But he was also an innovator. However crude his autocracy, and whatever fate his dynasty might have immediately suffered, his administrative system supplied the foundation on which all later Muslim rulers in India built."

Lane-Poole says: "Though he might be wrong-headed and disdainful of the law, Ala-ud-Din was a man of sense and determination, who knew his own mind, saw the necessities of the situation, met them by his own methods and carried out those methods with persistence." Ferishta tells us that so long as Ala-ud Din was active, he "executed justice with such rigour that robbery and theft, formerly so common, were not heard of in the land. The traveller slept secure on the highway, and the merchant carried his commodities in safety from the sea of Bengal to the mountains of Kabul and from Telingana to

Kashmir." The view of Elphinstone was that the rule of Ala-ud-Din was glorious and he was a successful monarch who exhibited a just exercise of his power. However, Dr. V. A. Smith does not agree with Elphinstone. His contention is that "facts do not warrant the assertion that he exhibited a just exercise of his powers and that his reign was glorious." In reality he was a particularly savage tyrant with very little regard for justice and his reign, though marked by the conquest of Gujarat and many successful raids like the storming of the two great fortresses, was exceedingly disgraceful in many respects."

According to Dr. S. Roy, "It is difficult to analyse or pass a verdict on Ala-ud-Din's character. As a king he was a ruthless tyrant, and as a man, treacherous and ungrateful. But with all these defects in his character, what carried him through was his resourcefulness, energy and capacity for work to which was added his unbounded courage tempered with calculation and a penetrating commonsense. He was a man of inordinate ambition, but also possessed bold and original ideas to which he would give practical shape with his genius for organization and leadership. A vigorous commander, he knew how to carry his army through strenuous campaigns. A master of diplomacy and finesse, he revealed it in his wonderful blitzkrieg in Devagiri and the subsequent events which led to his accession. As a ruler he was vigorous and efficient; and as a reformer, bold and original. He held a very exalted conception of kingship; the absolute State was the ideal for which he worked—a state untrammelled by the authority of the Ulama and unhampered by the influence of a powerful nobility. He understood the value of and prepared the ground for the separation of the State from the Church. He was not more bigoted than his age. Himself almost illiterate, he had nothing but contempt for learning and scholarship, though during his reign Delhi became 'the rival of Cairo and the equal of Constantinople' because of the throng of great men of whom the poet Amir Khusro and Hasan were the most famous. Ala-ud-Din was the first Muslim imperialist and the first great Muslim administrator of India. The history of Muslim empire and Muslim administration in India really begins with him. Ala-ud-Din, Sher Shah, and Akbar—each marks a distinctive step in the evolution of Indo-Muslim history." (*The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 40.)

Dr. K. S. Lal rightly points out that although Ala-ud-Din ascended the throne at the age of 30, he reached the apogee of power at 45 through unrivalled skill, studied tact and phenomenal energy. From nothingness, he rose to be one of the greatest rulers of Medieval India. With the help of a strong and disciplined army, he pulled down the native princes and stamped out sedition from the land. By a systematic tariff policy, he controlled the fluctuating market and with an efficient administrative machinery effectively governed the country for two decades. It is true that there were certain defects in his administrative system. His Government was one man's rule and such a Government is by its very nature uncertain. His rule was based on force and not on the will of the people. He was only feared and obeyed but not loved or respected. He neglected the economic prosperity of the state and just to benefit his military population, he



killed every incentive to trade and commerce. Under his regulations, the traders had neither freedom of movement nor hope of profit. He fleeced the peasantry. His spy system made the life of the people a hell. The oppression of the nobility left the Government in a paralytic condition after his death. However, in the view of Dr. K. S. Lal, all these accusations do not seem to hold water when a careful and critical analysis of his solid achievements is made. Ala-ud-Din had achieved much. He was able to turn a small kingdom of Delhi into an Empire comprising almost the whole of India. He was the first ruler whose political hegemony extended over the Deccan peninsula. He dealt a death-blow to the Mongol aggrandizement which threatened the very existence of Muslim rule in India. He curbed the power of the Hindu Rajas in the far off South. His work at least had permanent results even if his conquests were not permanent. Most of his administrative reforms served as models for later monarchs. Barani refers to the achievements of Ala-ud-Din in these words: "The first special feature of Ala-ud-Din's times is the cheapness of the necessities of life and fixed rates of grains in seasons of plenty and scarcity; the second is the unbroken chain of victories which the King and his commanders obtained, and it appeared as if victory preceded a military enterprise; the third is the crushing of the Mongols; the fourth is that a large force remained calm and contented on a small salary; the fifth is that contumacious landholders were suppressed; the sixth is that roads and highways became safe, and those who used to rob were made to guard them; seventh, that the traders were compelled to be honest; eighth is the abundance of strong buildings; ninth, that the Hindus were compelled into obedience and Muslims became true, abstemious and just; and the tenth is the congregation of artists and learned men such as had not been found to exist in any other reign."

Ala-ud-Din was a great military leader. He carried the militaristic ideal of Balban to its logical conclusion. He showed great vigour as an administrator. He can claim the credit of governing the country independently of the authority and guidance of the Ulema. However, Dr. Ishwari Prasad rightly points out that the foundations of the political system set up by Ala-ud-Din were unsound. His policy created a lot of discontentment among the various sections of society. The Hindu Rajas, who were deprived of their independence, merely waited for the opportunity to throw off the yoke of the Delhi Sultanate. The nobles were sick of the restrictions imposed upon them. The merchants resented the control of the market. The Hindus complained of their humiliation. The New Muslims intrigued against the Sultan. Over-centralisation, repression and espionage undermined the authority of the Sultan. Ala-ud-Din raised low born persons to the position of honour and eminence and that was resented by the nobles. Towards the end, the Sultan also became violent and whimsical. However, the greatest mistake of Ala-ud-Din was that he allowed Malik Kafur to become all-powerful. That ultimately proved suicidal not only to Ala-ud-Din himself but also to the Empire founded by him.



Ala-ud-Din was a great patron of learning. Amir Khusro was patronised by Ala-ud-Din. He was the greatest literary figure of that time. To begin with, Khusro lived in the Court of Prince Muhammad, the son of Balban. When Prince Muhammad died, he wrote an eulogy on Muhammad. Later on, Amir Khusro wrote *Tarikh-i-Alai* or *Khazain-ul-Futuh*. In this book he gave an account of the conquests of Ala-ud-Din. He wrote another book called *Ashiq* which contains the love story of Deval Devi and Khizr Khan. Amir Khusro continued to enjoy royal patronage even after the death of Ala-ud-Din. In his "Nuh-Spirr or Nine Skies," he gave the story of Sultan Mubarak Shah. He also lived in the court of Ghias-ud-Din Tughluq and wrote *Tughluqnama* in which he gave the story of Ghias-ud-Din Tughluq. Khusro wrote a lot in Hindi and he is considered to be a great Hindi writer. Khusro is also known as *Tuti-i-Hind* or Parrot of India. He was an excellent singer.

Zia-ud-Din Barani tells us that in addition to Amir Khusro, 46 scholars were patronised by Ala-ud-Din. Amir Hassan was one of them. He is known as the Sadi of India. Amir Arsalan Kohi and Kabir-ud-Din were great historians of this period and were patronised by Ala-ud-Din. Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din, Shaikh Rukn-ud-Din, and Qazi Mughis-ud-Din were great masters of philosophy and theology of those times and were all patronised by Ala-ud-Din.

Ala-ud-Din was fond of architecture. Many forts were built by his orders and the most important of them was Alai Fort or Koshak-i-Siri. The walls of this fort were made of stones, brick and lime. There were seven gates in it. According to Amir Khusro, "All the mosques which lay in ruins, were built anew by a profuse scattering of silver." In 1311, Ala-ud-Din began to extend the Qutb Minar. He also started the construction of a new Minar in the courtyard of the mosque of twice the size of the old Kutb Minar. The construction of the new Minar could not be completed by Ala-ud-Din. In 1311, Ala-ud-Din caused a large gate to be built for this mosque of red sand-stone and marble, with smaller gates on four sides of the larger gate. Ala-ud-Din built the "Palace of a Thousand Pillars" called *Hazar Situn*. The *Jama Masjid* was also constructed by him. The construction of the *Shamsi Tank* was also due to Ala-ud-Din. Zia-ud-Din Barani tells us that Ala-ud-Din employed 70,000 men in public works alone. Those men could build a palace in two or three days.

### Malik Kafur

Malik Kafur was originally a Hindu eunuch of Gujarat. He was very handsome and intelligent. In 1297, he was purchased for 1,000 Dinars by Nusrat Khan. That is the reason why Malik Kafur is sometimes called *Hazar-Dinari*. Ala-ud-Din was very much impressed by the personality of Malik Kafur and within less than ten years he was given the rank of *Naib*. Kafur also took up the title of *Malik Taj-ul-Malik Kafuri*.

Malik Kafur was responsible for the conquest of the South. Ala-ud-Din put Malik Kafur in charge of the Deccan campaigns and

the latter brought him victories, wealth and reputation. In 1306-7, Kafur brought about the submission of Devagiri. In 1309, he led an expedition against Telingana. Warrangal was besieged and its rulers were forced to surrender. Kafur took back to Delhi a lot of booty. In 1310, he was sent to conquer Dwarsamudra. Dwarsamudra was captured and Malik Kafur got a lot of booty. From Dwarsamudra, Kafur proceeded against the Pandya kingdom of Madura. Madura was looted and occupied and a mosque was built there. Malik Kafur went to Rameshwaram and built a mosque there. He got so much booty that it would have made Mahmud turn in his grave with wistful eyes. Even the spoils of Devagiri could not compare with those of Madura.

Malik Kafur's success in the Deccan made him so powerful that Ala-ud-Din became merely a puppet in his hands. This "evil genius of the Sultan" told Ala-ud-Din that his wife and sons were conspiring against him and consequently Malik-i-Jahan and Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan were imprisoned. While the princes were put in the Gwalior fort, Malik-i-Jahan was put in the old Delhi fort. Alp Khan was executed. The view of Elphinstone is that Malik Kafur went to the extent of even poisoning Ala-ud-Din and thereby brought about his death.

After the death of Ala-ud-Din, Kafur placed Shihab-ud-Din Umar on the throne and himself became the regent. As a regent, he was responsible for the execution of all those princes of the royal blood who had any claim to the throne. He ordered that the eyes of Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan be "cut out from the sockets with a razor like slices of melon". All the supporters of Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan were dismissed. Although an attempt was made to kill prince Mubarak, the latter succeeded in escaping through his own cleverness. Thirty-six days after the death of Ala-ud-Din, Malik Kafur and his associates were killed.

It goes without saying that Malik Kafur was a great military genius. He accomplished what no Muslim before him had been able to do. He was the person who paved the way for the further permanent conquest of the Deccan by the Muslims. The misfortune was that he became over ambitious and began to dream of becoming king himself and forgot the interests of the dynasty which was responsible for his rise. While trying to dispose of his rivals, he himself was killed.

#### **Qutb-ud-Din Mubarak Shah (1316-1320)**

Under the influence of Malik Kafur, Ala-ud-Din had disinherited Khizr Khan and nominated his minor son, Shihab-ud-Din Umar, as his successor. When Ala-ud-Din died, this boy was hardly six. Malik Kafur put this boy on the throne and himself became the regent. Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan were blinded. Mubarak Khan, the third son of Ala-ud-Din, who was then about seventeen or eighteen years of age, was imprisoned and Malik Kafur sent his agents to take out his eyes. However, Mubarak bribed those persons and instead of blinding Mubarak, they went back and killed Malik Kafur. After the death of Malik Kafur,

Mubarak was appointed regent for Shihab-ud-Din Umar. After about two months, Mubarak dethroned and blinded Shihab-ud-Din Umar and put himself on the throne. This happened on 1st April, 1316. Mubarak took up the title of Qutb-ud-Din Mubarak Shah.

After seating himself on the throne, he tried to win over the goodwill of the people. All persons were released. All harsh regulations of his father were cancelled. Those nobles, who had been banished by his father, were called back. A policy of forget and forgive was followed. The lands which were confiscated were given to their legitimate owners. Taxes were lowered. Zia-ud-Din Barani tells us that there was no longer fear of any dictation by the state in every matter. Unfortunately, the result of relaxation of controls was that there was a fall in the moral standards of the country and officials. Mubarak Shah also joined the nobles in drinking and merry-making. He came under the influence of Hasan who was originally a shepherd but was raised to the position of Prime Minister and given the title of Khusro.

Everybody took advantage of the weakness of the new ruler. There was a revolt in Gujarat. The ruler of Devagiri became independent. The important states of Rajputana, particularly Marwar, became independent. Ain-ul-Mulk Multani was sent to Gujarat and he was successful in putting down the revolt and Zafar Khan was appointed its Governor. In 1317, Mubarak Shah himself went to Devagiri to conquer it. Harapala Deva, the ruler of Devagiri, ran away from his capital. However, he was captured and put to death. His head was put on one of the gates of Devagiri. Muslim officials were put in charge of the various districts of Devagiri and Muslim garrisons were established in that territory. Gulbarga, Sagar and Dwarsamudra were occupied once again and put under Muslim officials. A mosque was built at Devagiri out of the material of Hindu temples. Malik Yaklaki was appointed the Governor of Devagiri.

A conspiracy was hatched to murder Mubarak Shah and put a son of Khizr Khan on the throne. The chief conspirator was Asad-ud-Din, a cousin of Mubarak Shah. Mubarak Shah came to know of the conspiracy from one of the conspirators and the result was that all the conspirators were arrested and put to death. Even Khizr Khan, Shadi Khan and Shihab-ud-Din were put to death. Mubarak Shah married Deval Devi,<sup>1</sup> widow of Khizr Khan.

1. It is stated that Mubarak Shah wrote to Khizr Khan the following letter: "You have lost sight of the eye and health of the body. You know that I was not instrumental in all this but now the oppressor (Malik Narb) is dead. If you were thrown into imprisonment, time for your release has arrived. I will make you governor of a province, an honour you amply deserve. You should, however, not burn in the fire of love for Deval Rani who is after all your slave. I hear that she has attained to such eminence that you lay your head at her feet. Even if she was as beautiful as the moon, she was not worthy of your worship. We wish that she may not be left with you. As she has been given to you by the Rostam, it is desired that she may be sent back to us. When your heavy attachment for her is a little abated, she would be sent back to you to serve you as a slave." Khizr Khan protested against the contents of the letter. He remonstrated that he had lost everything in the



The success of Mubarak Shah in the Deccan turned his head and he began to behave in a most irresponsible manner. Zafar Khan and Shahim were put to death without any cause. He himself spent all his time in the company of women and buffoons. He allowed the jesters and courtiers to abuse and make fool of the old and experienced nobles. The Sultan himself ran naked among his courtiers and the net result of all these things was that all respect for the crown disappeared. Malik Yaklaki, Governor of Devagiri, revolted and declared himself king. He was defeated and sent to Delhi. Mubarak Shah ordered his nose and ears to be cut. Later on, he was pardoned and made Governor of Samana.

Mubarak Shah had showered favours on Khusro and his associates. He was given many warnings against the designs of Khusro but he refused to listen to them. He allowed Khusro to have a separate cavalry of his own, 40,000 strong. Khusro was allowed to live inside the palace. His relations and friends were allowed to enter the palace. A conspiracy was hatched by Khusro to dispose of Mubarak Shah and on the night of 14th April, 1320, the troops of Khusro entered the palace and cut down the royal guards. Khusro himself caught hold of Mubarak Shah by the hair and Jaharia, one of his followers, stabbed him to death. The head of Mubarak Shah was cut off and thrown into the courtyard.

According to Dr S Roy, "Mubarak was an unworthy successor of his father. Frivolous and depraved, cruel and arrogant, Mubarak lacked his father's ability and vigour as well as his genius for organization and leadership. In him the vices of Ala-ud-Din were magnified, but his virtues were lacking. Though he did not observe fasts and say prayers, he assumed the title of Commander of the Faithful and Vicegerent of God as well as Imam, and thereby made the kingdom of Delhi independent of the Caliphate. His predecessors, including the lordly Balban and the mighty Ala-ud-Din Sikandar Sani, had all acknowledged the legal sovereignty of the Caliph. Mubarak also displayed hatred and animosity against the saint Nizam-ud-Din Auliya." (*The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 44).

#### **Nasir-ud-Din Khusro Shah (1320)**

After the death of Mubarak Shah, Khusro ascended the throne on 15th April, 1320, with the approval of the nobles and he continued to rule up to 5th September 1320. He took up the title of Nasir-ud-Din Khusro Shah. Most of the old officers and nobles were retained.

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world except his wife Deval Devi and it was cruel on the part of Mubarak Shah to snatch her away from him. He declared that he would prefer death to separation from her. That was enough for Mubarak Shah who merely wanted an excuse. Orders were passed for the execution of Khizr Khan and the same were carried out. The title of Deval Devi after the death of Khizr Khan is obscure. All that Barani says is that all the ladies were brought to Delhi from Gwalior where Khizr Khan was put to death. Barani does not say what happened to Deval Devi. Khusro is also silent on this point. However, Hajji-ud-Dabir says that Mubarak Shah married Deval Devi against her will and everybody condemned his action. Ferishta also says that Mubarak Shah took Deval Devi into his harem. Barani says that after the murder of Mubarak Shah by Khusro Khan, Deval Devi was married by Khusro.



A few were put to death. Khusro Shah married Deval Devi, widow of Khizr Khan.

Khusro Shah tried to win over the nobles and officers by all possible means. Wahid-ud Din Qureshi, who was formerly a Minister of Mubarak Shah, was allowed to retain his post and was given the title of Taj-ul-Mulk. Ain-ul-Mulk Multani was given the titles of Alam Khan and Amir-ul-Umara. Ghazi Malik continued to be the Governor of the Punjab and Warden of the Marches. Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din Auliya of Delhi was won over. His own followers were handsomely rewarded.

Khusro Shah was originally a Hindu and later on became a Muslim. It is true that he won over a large number of Muslim commanders and officials and divines but there were many Turkish nobles who were opposed to the Indian Muslims being in charge of the administration of the country. Ghazi Malik, who was the Governor of the Punjab and the Warden of the Marches, was one of them. He became the leader of all those who were opposed to Khusro Shah and tried to win over the Governors of Multan, Samana and Siwistan but failed. Ain-ul Mulk Multani refused to join Ghazi Malik but the latter started intrigues and won over a large number of persons to his side. His son, Fakhr-ud-Din Muhammad Jauna, who had been appointed by Khusro Shah as Master of the House escaped from Delhi and joined his father at Dipalpur. After making preparations, Ghazi Malik marched on Delhi. He was opposed by the Governor of Samana but the latter was defeated. Ghazi Malik was also opposed by Hisam-ud-Din at Sirsa but the latter was also defeated. When Ghazi Malik reached near Delhi, Khusro Shah himself came out to give him battle. Unfortunately, Ain-ul-Mulk Multani withdrew his troops before the battle. Consequently Khusro Shah was defeated and killed on 5th September, 1320. Thus came to an end the Khalji dynasty after a period of thirty years of rule in India.

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## CHAPTER VIII

# Mongol Invasions of India

The Mongol invasions of India deserve special attention at the hands of the students of history of the Sultanate period as the Mongols threatened the very existence of the Muslim empire in India for about a century. They attacked India again and again more with a view to enrich themselves with the wealth of India than with a view to set up a kingdom of their own in this country. The Mongols were ferocious people who took pleasure in loot, murder, plunder and destruction. They were barbarians and they took pleasure in burning towns and organising massacres. They were responsible for every kind of inhuman atrocity. They were the enemies of civilisation. They destroyed mosques, temples and churches. They took pleasure in burning holy books. The poet Amir Khusro himself was captured by them and he suffered terribly at their hands. This is what he says about them. "The Muslim martyrs died in the desert with their blood, while the Muslim captives had their necks tied together like so many flowers into garlands. I was also taken prisoner, and from fear that they would shed my blood, not a drop of blood remained in my veins. It ran about like water, here and there with innumerable blisters on my face like bubbles on the surface of a stream. My tongue was parched and dry from excessive thirst and my stomach seemed to have collapsed for want of food. They left me nude like a leafless tree in winter or a flower that has been much lacerated by thorns. My Mongol captor sat on a horse like a lion bestriding the spur of a mountain. a disgusting stench came out of his mouth, etc. and on his chin there grew, like a hyacinth, a tuft of hair. If through weakness I lagged a little behind, he would threaten me sometimes with his frying pan and sometimes with his spear. I sighed and thought that release from such a situation was quite impossible. But thank God, I did regain my freedom without my breast being pierced by an arrow or my body cut into two by the sword."

The Mongol invasions were undertaken mainly by the ill-organised hordes of the rulers of Transoxiana who had control of

Kabul and Ghazni in the North and Qandhar and the Bolan Pass in the South. It is rightly pointed out that if India had been attacked by the main armies of the Mongols, the Sultan of Delhi might not have been able to check them. However, one disadvantage of this was that the Sultans of Delhi were not able to ascertain the strength of the invaders and also the object of their invasions. They appeared on the Indian frontiers all of a sudden like ants and locusts. They looted, plundered and fled away. The uncertainty and the perpetual anxiety arising out of the frequency of the Mongol invasions had a very demoralising effect on the Government and people of India. The Mongol menace was like a dark ominous cloud on the North-West horizon of India and no one knew when it was likely to burst. The Mongols depended upon their fleet-footed cavalry. They had no problem of food supply. They could organise lightning raids with impunity. They were generally on the offensive. From the military point of view, the advantage lies invariably with the army which is on the offensive and hence the Mongols were gainers. From the strategic point of view also, the Sultans of Delhi were not in a happy position. The scientific frontier for the defence of India would have been the Kabul-Ghazni-Qandhar line. Such a line of defence was not possible and consequently the Mongols were able to penetrate successfully into Sindh and Upper Punjab. When the line of defence was prepared, it ran along Lahore, Dipalpur, Uch, Samana and Multan. Experience showed that the Mongols could not be held even at that line although in many cases they were stopped and repulsed.

The first Mongol invasion of India took place in the reign of Iltutmish. The Mongols appeared on the banks of the river Indus in 1221 under the command of their formidable leader called Changiz Khan (1162-1227). They came to India under the following circumstances: Jalal-ud-Din Mangbarni, the last Shah of Khwarism or Khiva, sought shelter from the Mongols in the Doab between the Indus and the Jhelum. Changiz Khan came in hot pursuit of Jalal-ud-Din up to the Indus. It appeared that Iltutmish was going to be in trouble. However, the latter diplomatically refused to help Jalal-ud-Din on the ground that the climate of the Punjab was not suitable for him. The result was that Changiz Khan did not pursue his enemy and retired. Thus was averted what might have been a terrible calamity for the country. About the attitude of Iltutmish towards Jalal-ud-Din, Dr. Habib-ullah observes thus: "Rules of hospitality required only one answer to the request but Iltutmish was a great realist. To reverse Aibak's and his own foreign policy at this stage and to seek the displeasure of a far more terrible power by receiving the fugitive prince, would have been not only unwise but almost suicidal. Mangbarni therefore was given a polite refusal and when he prepared to avenge himself by further aggressions in the Punjab, Iltutmish got ready for military action. It did not, however, come to actual fighting for the prince thought it prudent to turn his



attention to Qabachah." (*The foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, p. 95.)

For about 20 years, the Mongols did not disturb the peace of the Sultanate. In 1241, they attacked India again under their leader named Tair who was a lieutenant of Hulaqu. The Mongols attacked Multan but did not succeed in capturing it. They moved northwards and captured Lahore in December 1241. The Government of Lahore was taken by surprise. Moreover, the garrison at Lahore was not well-equipped. The merchants and people of Lahore also did not like the idea of opposing the Mongols on account of their selfish aims. An army was sent by Behram Shah against the Mongols but the same was defeated. Lahore was captured and plundered and its residents were massacred. After that, the Mongols retired.

During the next 10 years, the insurgents of the Khokhars and the selfish ambitions of some Turkish nobles including the brother of Balban, named Kishlu Khan, created a chaotic condition. Most of Sind and the region between the Jhelum and the Indus passed under the hands, if not the sovereignty, of the Mongols.

The menace of the Mongols became very great during the reign of Balban. Their raids became more frequent and powerful. Without making an all-out attempt at conquest, the Mongols almost annually intruded into the country for loot and plunder. Two important Mongol invasions took place in the reign of Balban in 1279 and 1285. These invasions were so formidable that they strained all the might and resources of Balban. However, the Mongols were defeated and driven away. Prince Mohammad, the son of Balban, lost his life while fighting against the Mongols.

A reference may be made to some of the measures adopted by Balban to protect his empire against the Mongols. The Khokhars were punished and the Salt Range was subdued and pacified. A chain of fortresses with well-equipped and adequately provisioned garrisons were built. The command of the defence of the frontier was given to tried military hands like Sher Khan Sanqar, a cousin of Balban. It is pointed out that Sher Khan did a lot in strengthening the defences of the frontier. However, the very success of Sher Khan made Balban jealous of him and the result was that Sher Khan was poisoned.

The Mongols attacked again in the reign of Kaiqubad under their leader Tamar Khan of Ghazni. They carried rapine and plunder as far as Samana. However, the defence measures adopted by Balban were still strong and the result was that the Mongols were defeated and they had to go back home after terrible losses. Malik Baqbaq played an important part in the defeat of the Mongols.

The Mongols again attacked India in the reign of Jalal-ud-Din Khalji in 1292 A.D. under the command of Abdulla, a grand-son of Hulaqu. They were more than one lakh in number. They

carried rapine and plunder up to Sunam. In spite of his old age, Jalal-ud-Din went in person to oppose them and was successful in defeating them. Ulghu, a descendant of Changiz Khan and a few thousand of his Mongol followers, embraced Islam and were settled in a colony outside Delhi which came to be known as Mughalpura. The descendants of these Mongols came to be known as new Mussalmans.

Ala-ud-Din had to face more than a dozen Mongol invasions. Those invasions started from the end of 1296 A.D. and continued upto 1308 A.D. The first invasion took place in 1296 A.D. Zaffar Khan was despatched against them and they were defeated near Jullundur and a large number of them were killed. The second invasion took place in 1297 A.D. under Kadar. The Mongols were more than one lakh in number. They crossed the river Indus but were stopped by Ulugh Khan, the son-in-law of the Sultan, and Zaffar Khan at Jullundur and driven back.

In 1298 A.D., another Mongol horde under Saldi entered India through the Bolan pass. It captured Siwistan and re-occupied the Fort of Sibi. Zaffar Khan was despatched against them and he won a decisive victory against them. The Fort of Sibi was recaptured by assault. Saldi and 17,000 Mongols were captured and sent in chains to Delhi.

In 1299 A.D., the Mongols attacked India under their leader Qutlugh Khawaja, with an army of 2 lakhs. This time they entered India with the definite object of conquering her. The invaders did not bother about the frontier garrison and marched straight to Delhi. Ala-ud-Din rose to the occasion at this "darkest hour". He rejected the advice of the Kotwal of Delhi who suggested that the Mongols be paid and asked to go back. Zaffar Khan played an important part in beating back the Mongols. However, he himself lost his life.

In 1303 A.D., the Mongols attacked India under the leadership of Targhi. They were 100,000 strong and marched to Delhi and besieged it. Ala-ud-Din was away to Chittor and when he came back he had to encamp himself in the Fort of Siri. Had the siege been carried on relentlessly by the Mongols, the city of Delhi would certainly have fallen. However, the Mongols called off the siege and marched homewards. It is stated that the sudden departure of the Mongols was due to a miracle performed by the Sufi saint, Nizam-ud-Din Aulia. However, this view is not accepted. The real reason was that the Mongols had no siege-guns and hence they decided to retire.

The Mongols appeared again in 1306 A.D. They crossed the Indus near Multan and proceeded towards the Himalayas. Ghazi Malik who was the Governor of the Punjab intercepted the Mongols and a large number of them were killed. 50,000 Mongols were made prisoners including their leader Kabak. They were put to death and their wives and children were sold as slaves.

The last Mongol invasion took place in 1308 A.D. under their leader, Iqbalmand. He crossed the Indus but could not make any headway. He was defeated with his followers and was killed. A large number of Mongols were made prisoners and were sent to Delhi where they were put to death. The Mongols did not dare to attack India after 1308.

A reference may be made to some of the measures adopted by Ala-ud-Din to tackle the Mongol problem. He got the old forts repaired. New forts were constructed. A massive standing army of 4,75,000 was raised to fight against the Mongols. Very capable and trusted officers were put in charge of the defence of the frontiers. Ghazi Malik was appointed the Warden of the Western Marches in 1305 A.D. New workshops to manufacture improved types of weapons were set up. Armies were stationed at Dipalpur, Samana and Multan. The Mongols who had embraced Islam and settled in India were massacred. Even their wives and children were brutally murdered. Barani, the historian of this period, tells us that the Mongols were crushingly defeated. Every year thousands of them were trampled by the elephants and their blood and bones were used as mortar for building the new capital of Ala-ud-Din at Siri. These barbaric punishments so demoralised the Mongols that "all fancy of coming to Hindustan was washed off their breasts." As a matter of fact, the new frontier army under Ghazi Malik took the offensive and paid the Mongols in their own coin. The Delhi army carried fire and sword in the Mongol territories. According to one authority, the Delhi army even captured Ghazni.

The Mongol threat continued to persist even after Ala-ud-Din. Many Mongol tribes, even after their conversion to Islam, continued to harass the Sultans of Delhi. It is interesting to note that Babar who was a direct descendant of Changiz Khan and Timur was the founder of the Mughal Empire in India.

### **Effects of Mongol Invasions**

It cannot be denied that the Mongol invasions of India had far-reaching effects. Some portions of Indian territory were temporarily lost by the Delhi Sultan. The political frontiers of India receded from the base of the Hindukush to the banks of the River Ravi or Beas in the North and the lower course of the river Indus in the South. Most of Sindh and the region between the Ravi and the Indus was under the control of the Mongols. The Mongol invasions also hampered the process of expansion and consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate. The danger from Mongol invasions did not leave the Sultans any time to attend to the task of conquering other parts of India. The rulers of Malwa and Rajputana continued to challenge the Sultans of Delhi. The pockets of Hindu resistance in the Doab could not be successfully liquidated in spite of many efforts.

Another effect of Mongol invasions was that the central authority of the Delhi Sultans remained weak. The Sultans had to depend upon the nobles to fight against the Mongols and conse-

quently they could not afford to take action against them. The Sultans knew that their very existence may be threatened if they decided to take action against those who alone could be expected to support them. Although it was realised that the Iqtadari system resulted in strengthening the hands of the nobles, yet the same was not abolished on account of fear of opposition from the nobles. The Sultans were forced to give considerable power to their commanders who were appointed to guard the frontiers against the Mongols. It is significant to note that the two dynasties of the Sultans of Delhi, viz., Khalji and Tughluq, were founded by military officials who were Wardens of the Western Marches. As the nobles were very strong, the authority of the Central Government was bound to be weak.

The Mongol invasions also had their effect on the administrative set up of the Sultans of Delhi. The danger of the Mongols was always there. All the efforts of the Sultans were to protect their kingdom from their attacks. No wonder, the administrative set up of the Sultans was to be such which could meet the Mongol's threat. The result was that the military aspect of the administration was given foremost attention and its civil aspect was practically neglected. The administration of Sultans retained the form of military occupation rather than that of a settled Government. Before Ala-ud-Din introduced his land-revenue system, there was no revenue organisation worth the name. The collection of revenue was left to the free will of the individual officers who either utilised local agencies like the village headmen or resorted to punitive measures. As there was a continued military emergency facing the Sultans, they were not able to devote themselves to the all-important problem of civil administration whose success alone could ensure the welfare of the people.

In the economic field also, the Mongol invasions had very unhappy consequences. The Mongols isolated India from the rest of central Asia. They dried up the traditional overland trade routes. A lot of money had to be collected to fight against the Mongols and that could be had by taxing the people more and more. All this must have affected adversely the conditions of the people. The market regulations of Ala-ud-Din imposed an additional burden on the peasantry as they were compelled to sell their commodities cheap.

If the Mongol invasion brought evil consequences in their wake, they also brought certain benefits to India. The Mongols conquered Afghanistan and Iran and thereby isolated the Sultans of Delhi from the rest of the Muslim world. The result was that the Sultans of Delhi could not rely upon any help from the Muslims in other parts of the world. Consequently, they were forced to think in terms of India alone. They did not treat their Indian possessions as colonies. The Muslims of India were compelled to make India their homeland and ultimately they absorbed and adopted the traditions of India. Their political and cultural outlook and also their institutions became more and more Indianised.



It is rightly said that the Mongol invasions contributed to the slow but gradual process of Indianisation of the alien Muslim conquerors of India. Another advantage which India derived from the Mongol invasions was that art and culture developed under the Sultans of Delhi. The Mongols had destroyed all the important centres of Islamic culture and learning. Delhi was the only place which could give refuge to all those who wanted scope for the development of their talents. The result was that many saints, scholars, artists and artisans, famous for their achievements in various fields, flocked to Delhi and Delhi became one of the largest cities of the world. Barani has rightly pointed out that *Delhi became "the equal of Baghdad and the rival of Cairo and Constantinople."*

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

- Lal, K. S. : *History of the Khaljis.*  
 Warsi : *History of Ala-ud-Din,*  
 Zia-ud-Din Barani : *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi.*

## CHAPTER IX

# The Tughluqs or Qaraunah Turks

(1320—1414 A.D.)

### Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq (1320-1325)

Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq or Ghazi Malik was the founder of the Tughluq dynasty. This dynasty is also known as the dynasty of the Qaraunah Turks as the father of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq was a Qaraunah Turk. Ibn Batuta tells us that he heard from Shaikh Rukn-ud-Din Multani that Sultan Tughluq was of the stock of Qaraunah Turks who lived in the mountainous region between Sindh and Turkistan. Speaking of the Qaraunahs, Marco Polo tells us that this name was given to them because they were the sons of Indian mothers by Tartar fathers. Nay Elias, the translator of Mirza Haidar's *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, made enquiries regarding the origin of the Qaraunahs and his conclusion was that the Qaraunahs were among the Mongols of Central Asia and they took a prominent part in Mongol campaigns in Persia in early times. The Muhammadan historians of India do not write anything about the Qaraunahs.

### His Rise

Ghazi Tughluq was a man of humble origin. While his mother was a Jat woman from the Punjab, his father was a Turkish slave of Balban. On account of his parentage, "Ghazi Malik typified in his character the salient features of the two races: the modesty and mildness of the Hindus and the virility and vigour of the Turks." Although he started his life as an ordinary trooper, he rose to prominence by his ability and hard work. During the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khalji, he was appointed the Warden of the Marches and Governor of Dipalpur. He fought against the Mongols on 29 occasions and chased them out of India and hence came to be known as Malik-i-Ghazi. Ghazi Malik was one of the most powerful nobles in the kingdom at the time of the death of Ala-ud-Din and he continued to be so during the reign of Mubarak Shah. Although Khusrav Shah tried to conciliate him, that had no effect on Ghazi Malik. Assisted by his son Juna Khan, he marched against Khusrav Shah, defeated him and then got him executed. It is stated that after his entry in Delhi as a conqueror, Ghazi Malik caused an inquiry to be made whether there was any descendant of Ala-ud-Din Khalji whom he could put on the throne of Delhi. It is difficult to say how far that

inquiry was sincere and how far it was merely a show. Anyhow, Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq ascended the throne on 8th September 1320. He was the first Sultan of Delhi who took up the title of Ghazi or slayer of the infidels.

### Domestic Policy

The reign of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq can be discussed under two heads—domestic policy and foreign policy. As regards domestic policy, his first task was to win over the confidence of the nobles and officers and to restore order in the empire. It is true that the supporters of Khusrau Shah were ruthlessly exterminated but the other nobles and officers were leniently treated. He restored the lands of all those who had been deprived of them by Ala-ud-Din Khalji. He ordered a secret inquiry to be made into claims and jagats and all unlawful grants were confiscated to the state. He tried to recover the treasure which had been squandered by Khusrau Shah or plundered during the confusion after his fall and he succeeded in that attempt to a large extent. Many Shaikhs who had received large sums of money from Khusrau Shah returned the same. However, Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din Auliya who had received five lacs of Tankas, refused to refund the amount on the plea that he had given away the same in charity. This was not liked by Ghazi Malik but he could do nothing against the Shaikh on account of his popularity. He tried to denounce the Shaikh "for indulgence in the ecstatic songs and dances of darveshes, a form of devotion regarded as unlawful by rigid Sunnis of the established region." However, he did not succeed in doing so as the 53 theologians consulted by him did not find any fault in the actions of the Shaikh.

To prevent corruption and embezzlement, Ghazi Malik paid his officers well and promoted to high rank only those who gave proof of their loyalty and devotion. While distributing rewards, he was guided by considerations of rank, merit and length of service. He avoided all invidious distinctions. Ghazi Malik was not a whimsical despot but a sagacious and thoughtful ruler who always consulted his councillors in important matters of state.

As regards his **revenue policy**, he discontinued the system of farming of taxes. The farmers of revenue were not allowed even to approach the Diwan-i-Wizarat. The excesses of the collectors of revenue were checked. The Amirs and Malikis were not allowed to take as their fee more than 1/15th of the revenue of their provinces. The Karkuns and Mutsurifs were not allowed to take more than 5 to 10 per thousand. It was ordered that the Diwan-i-Wizarat should not increase the land revenue of any Iqta beyond one-tenth or one-eleventh in a year. If there was to be any enhancement, the same should be spread over a number of years. Barani tells us that "the Khiraj was to increase gradually over a number of years and not all at once, for by doing so the country suffers and the path of progress is blocked." Again "Jagirdars and Hakims were asked to be careful in the realization of the Khiraj so that the Khuts and Muqaddams may not impose any additional burden upon the people besides the state dues. Large remissions of revenue were made in

times of draught and the defaulters were treated with great generosity. No man was to be held in bondage for the sake of money and every facility was to be provided by the state to enable the people to meet their obligations without any discomfort or vexation."

The practice of the survey of land was given up as it was not working satisfactorily and it was ordered that the land revenue should be assessed by the collectors in person. Ghazi Malik also took steps to bring more area under cultivation. His view was that the surest method of increasing revenue was "the extension of cultivation, not the enhancement of the demand." The result of his policy was that a lot of waste land was brought under cultivation. Canals were also excavated to irrigate the fields. Gardens were planted. Forts were also built to give shelter to cultivators against brigands. It appears from Barani that all sections of the people were not treated alike. The same writer tells us that certain sections of the people were to "be taxed so that they might not be blinded with wealth and so become discontented and rebellious; nor, on the other hand, be so reduced to poverty and destitution as to be unable to pursue their husbandry."

Ghazi Malik paid attention to all departments of the state. The **judicial** and **policy arrangements** were so efficient that "the wolf dared not seize upon the lamb and the lion and the deer drank at one stream." The Chehra and Dagh system introduced by Ala-ud-Din was continued. A most efficient postal service was restored. Posts were carried by runners and horsemen who were stationed at distances of two-thirds of a mile or 7 or 8 miles respectively all over the kingdom. News travelled at the rate of one hundred miles a day. Ghazi Malik devised a system of poor relief. He patronized religious institutions and literary men. Amir Khusro was his poet laureate and he received from the state a pension of 1,000 Tankas per mensem.

Ghazi Malik "made his court more austere than it had ever been except probably in the time of Balban." He acted with moderation and wisdom. No wonder, Amir Khusro praises him in these words: "He never did anything that was not replete with wisdom and sense. He might be said to wear a hundred doctors' hoods under his crown."

### Foreign Policy

As regards his foreign policy, Ghazi Malik was a great annexationist. He was determined to bring under his control all those who had defied the authority of the Delhi Sultanate.

(1) In pursuance of that policy, he sent in 1321 his son Juna Khan, later on Muhammad Tughluq, to subdue Prataparudradeva II of Warangal who had increased his power during the period of disorder following the death of Ala-ud-Din Khalji and had also refused to pay the usual tribute to Delhi government. The mud fort of Warangal was besieged but the same was defended by the Hindus with courage and determination. Juna Khan had to come back without achieving any success on account of the outbreak of pestilence and intrigues. According to Barani and Yahiya-bin-Ahmed who



have been followed by Nizam-ud-Din Ahmed, Badauni and Ferishta, those intrigues were due to some traitors in the army. However, Ibn Batuta tells us that prince Juna Khan who intended to seize the throne was responsible for those intrigues. Sir Wolseley Haig, the able editor of the Cambridge History of India, Vol. III, accepts the view of Ibn Batuta. However, this view is not accepted by Dr. Ishwari Prasad in his History of Qaraunah Turks.

Four months after the return of Juna Khan to Delhi, he was sent once again to Warangal at the head of another expedition. This was in 1323. Juna Khan captured Bidar and then marched on Warangal. The Hindus fought desperately, but were unsuccessful against the invaders. Ultimately, Prataparudradeva II, his family and nobles fell into the hands of the invaders. The Raja was sent to Delhi. The Kakatiya kingdom of Warangal, though not formally annexed by Ghazi Malik, was divided into many districts which were allotted to various Turkish nobles and officers. The city of Warangal was named Sultanpur.

(2) When Prince Juna Khan was on his way back to Delhi, he attacked the kingdom of **Utkala** in Orissa. He was able to capture 50 elephants and many other valuable articles.

(3) Ghazi Malik had also to intervene in **Bengal**. There was a civil war among the three sons of Shams-ud-Din Firuz Shah and their names were Ghiyas-ud-Din, Shihab-ud-Din and Nasir-ud-Din. Ghiyas-ud-Din who was the Governor of East Bengal, overthrew Shihab-ud-Din and occupied the throne of Lakhnauti in 1319. This was coveted by Nasir-ud-Din and the latter appealed to the Delhi Sultan for help. The Sultan responded to the appeal and personally marched to Bengal. On the way, Ghazi Malik was joined by Nasir-ud-Din. Ghiyas-ud-Din was defeated and made a prisoner. Nasir-ud-Din was put on the throne of West Bengal as a vassal of Delhi, and East Bengal was annexed to Delhi. On his way back to Delhi, Ghazi Malik reduced to submission Raja Har Singh Deva of Tirhut (Mithila). Henceforth, Tirhut became a fief of the Delhi Sultanate.

(4) In 1324, the Mongols invaded North India. However, they were defeated and their leaders were captured and brought to Delhi.

### Death

When Ghazi Malik was in Bengal, he received information about the activities of his Prince Juna Khan. The latter was increasing the number of his followers in order to have a powerful party of his own. He became a disciple of Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din Auliya who was on bad terms with his father. The Shaikh is said to have made a prophecy that Prince Juna Khan would become king of Delhi very soon. Likewise, the astrologers stated that Ghazi Malik would not come back to Delhi. Ghazi Malik came back to Delhi from Bengal hurriedly. Prince Juna Khan erected a wooden pavilion at Afghanpur, a village about 6 miles from Delhi, to give reception to his father. The building was so designed as to fall when touched in a certain part by elephants. Ghazi Malik was entertained under the

pavilion. When the meal was over, Ghazi Malik was requested by his son Juna Khan to have a view of the elephants brought from Bengal. Ghazi Malik having agreed, the elephants were paraded. When they came into contact with that part of the building which had been designed to bring about its collapse, the entire pavilion fell. Ghazi Malik was crushed along with his son Prince Mahmud Khan. The Sultan was found bent over the body of Mahmud Khan as if trying to protect him. Juna Khan is said to have purposely delayed the removal of the debris.

There are different views regarding the circumstances leading to the death of Ghazi Malik. Barani simply tells us that a thunder-bolt of a calamity from heaven fell upon the Sultan and he was with five or six others crushed under the debris. From the translation of Elliot, it appears that lightning fell upon the roof and the whole structure came down with a crash. Ibn Batuta who came to India in 1333 A.D., definitely tells us that Prince Juna Khan was the cause of the death of his father. The source of his information was Shaikh Rukn-ud-Din Multani who was present with the emperor on the occasion. He also tells us that Prince Juna Khan deliberately delayed the arrival of workmen who were called to dig up the body of the Sultan with their shovels. Ibn Batuta also tells us that the construction of the pavilion was the work of Ahmed Ayaz who was later on made Chief Minister when Juna Khan himself became Sultan. Circumstantial evidence is also in favour of Ibn Batuta. He has also no axe to grind. Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad tells us that the hasty construction of the structure creates a suspicion that Prince Juna Khan was responsible for the death of his father. The death of Ghazi Malik was due to Ahmad. Abul Fazl and Badauni also suspect a conspiracy of Juna Khan. Isami, a contemporary writer, also supports Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad. The view of Dr. Ishwari Prasad is that there are strong reasons for thinking that the death of the Sultan was the result of a conspiracy in which Juna Khan took part and was not due to any accident. Sir Wolseley Haig also holds that the death of the Sultan was the result of a plot cleverly engineered by Juna Khan. However, Dr. Mahdi Husain holds that the pavilion fell of its own accord and Prince Juna Khan had absolutely no hand in the matter. The view generally accepted is that Prince Juna Khan was responsible for the death of his father.

### Estimate

Ghazi Malik was an experienced soldier and a seasoned general. He rose to power by dint of hard work and ability. He established law and order within his empire and adopted various measures which were intended to add to the happiness and prosperity of his subjects. There was material prosperity of the people during his reign. He held his court twice a day in order to give justice to the people. He was mild and generous to his courtiers, friends and colleagues. However, he was strict with Hindus. He indulged in temple destruction and image-breaking during the course of his campaigns. He was a rigid Sunni Mussalman. He was a patron of

learning and there were scholars and poets in his court. He left an interesting monument in the fortress capital of Tughlaqabad which he ~~built~~ for himself about 10 miles to the south of the site afterwards selected by Shahjahan for his city. He founded this town immediately after his ascent to the throne and completed it before he received the news of the conquest of Tainana. Ibn Batuta tells us that "Here were Tughlaq's treasures and palaces and the great palace which he built of albed bricks, which, when the sun rose shone so brightly that one could gaze readily upon it. There he laid up great treasures and it was related that he constructed there a cistern and had molten gold poured into it so that it became one solid mass, and his son Muhammad Shah became possessed of all of it when he succeeded him." The mausoleum of Ghazi Malik in red-stone and white marble connected with his town by a bridge carried on arches and the massive walls of his fort, still remain.

Ghazi Malik followed a policy of austerity which compares favourably with that of Balban. He abstained from sensual pleasures. He shrank from the vice of "handsome beardless boys" which was so prevalent at that time. He avoided the tyranny and pomp and pageantry of Balban and Aurangzeb in public life and state functions. "During his brief reign he did much to wipe out the disgrace which had befallen the empire of Delhi, to reorganise the administration which had fallen out of gear, and to re-establish the power and prestige of the monarchy which had been reduced to a nullity during the Khusrute regime."

Ghazi Malik has sometimes been compared with Jalal ud-Din Firuz Khalji. According to Sir Wolsely Haig, "Both were aged warriors called up to restore the dominion of Islam, menaced by the extinction of the dynasties which they had long served, but here all similarity between them ends. The powers of Firuz were failing when he was called to the throne, his reign would have closed the history of his family but for the usurpation of his unscrupulous but vigorous nephew, Tughluq on the other hand, though old, was in full vigour of mind, and during the short reign displayed none of the contemptible weakness of Firuz. He was able to enforce many of the salutary laws of Ala-ud-Din and to enact others which restored order in a kingdom which had nearly passed from the grasp of Islam. He enjoyed the advantage of pure Turkish lineage, his elevation excited no jealousy among the nobles who had formerly been his equals and he was able, within a week of his accession, to pacify the capital and within forty days his sovereignty was everywhere acknowledged." According to S.R. Sharma, "Jalal-ud-Din's reign was weak, senile and fatuous; Ghiyas-ud-Din's was strong, virile and fruitful. In essential respects the former resembles the Mughal Bahadur Shah I, the latter reminds us of Sher Shah Sur. Especially in administrative policy Tughluq Shah I must be considered the prototype of the later Sher Shah."

### **Amir Khusro (1253-1325)**

A reference may be made to Amir Khusro who died in the same year in which Ghazi Malik died. He was the greatest of all



the poets of India who have written in Persian. He was born in 1250 at Patan and died at the age of 72. His father was a native of Kashi in Utkal and he was driven from his native land by the Mongols and he found shelter in India. The original name of the poet was Yamin-ud-Din Muhammad Hasan although he is commonly known as Amir Khusro. The young poet entered the service of Nizam-ud-Din Khalji but when he became a disciple of Shaukh Nizam-ud-Din Auliya, he gave up worldly ambitions and retired from worldly life. However, he continued to write poetry. It is estimated that he wrote more than 4 lakhs of couplets. His couplets have been divided into four classes. To the first class belong his youthful effusions. To the second class belong poems of early middle age and those were written when Amir Khusro was giving up childish things and turning his thoughts towards religion. To the third class belong those poems which were written when Amir Khusro had attained the dignity of a religious teacher. To the fourth class belong the poems of his old age. Each of the four classes bears the impression of his views on this world and the next. In the second class are to be found poems which were intended to please the Emperor.

The historical Masnavis composed by Amir Khusro are of the greatest importance for purposes of history. *Qiran-us-Sa'dain* or "The Conjunctions of the Two Auspicious Stars" was written at the request of Kaiqubad. It has for its main theme the quarrel and reconciliation between Kaiqubad and Bughra Khan. As Amir Khusro enjoyed the patronage of both the father and son and was himself an observer of the incident described by him, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of his statements. *Miftah-ul-Futuh*, a portion of the *Ghurrat-ul-Kamal* or *The Key to Success* deals with the earlier successes of Jalal-ud-Din Firuz Khalji. The central theme of *Ashiq* is the romantic love of Khizr Khan, the eldest son of Ala-ud-Din Khalji and Devala Devi. It begins with the conquest of India by the Muslims and proceeds to give a detailed account of the victories of Ala-ud-Din in peace and war—his successful campaigns against the Mongols, his expeditions to the Deccan, his triumph in Gujarat, and his regulations which introduced peace and prosperity in the country. Apart from its literary value, the *Ashiq* is perhaps the most important of Amir Khusro's works from the historical point of view. Here we have a contemporary account of the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khalji, written by a shrewd observer who personally knew all the principal actors in the drama.

*Nuh Sipihr* or "the Nine Skies" was written by Amir Khusro at the request of Mubarak Khalji to celebrate the glory of his reign. Incidentally the poet throws much light on the social and religious conditions prevalent in his age. Amir Khusro says here that India is far superior to Khorasan. The Indians are very proficient in all branches of philosophy and learning is widespread among them. While foreign scholars very often come to India for study, the people of India are so advanced that they never feel the need of going to other countries for the purpose of adding to their knowledge.

In *Ghurrat-ul-Kamal*, Amir Khusro gives us a very interesting



discussion on the types and merits of poetry in general and incidentally dwells upon the beauty of the language and poetry of India.

Tarikh-i-Alai or Khazain-ul-Futuh is a short but very valuable history of the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khalji. The general accuracy of Amir Khusro is beyond doubt, but no modern historian can accept in full his estimate of the character and achievements of Ala-ud-Din. Amir Khusro gives us many interesting details and if we can follow the very difficult language in which the work is written, it will prove to be a veritable mine of information.

In his five Diwans, viz., Tuhfat-us-Sighar, Wast-ul-Tayat, Ghurrat-ul-Kamal, Bakiya-i-Nakiya, and Nihayat-ul-Kamal, Amir Khusro often refers to incidents in his own career and many of the poems are in praise of his numerous patrons.

Amir Khusro had great respect for poet Sadi of Persia. When the latter visited India, he was very much entertained by Amir Khusro and the result was that Sadi praised Amir Khusro before Ala-ud-Din Khalji. In one of his verses, Amir Khusro admits the influence of Sadi in these words: "The volume of my verse hath the binding of Shiraz."

According to Dr. A. C. Banerjee, "There are very few literary men in medieval Indian history who can lay claim to the wide personal knowledge of men and events during a period extending over half a century which it was the privilege of Amir Khusro to possess. Though he wisely confined his activities to the sphere in which his genius shone with unrivalled brilliance, and never aspired after any direct participation in political affairs, yet his unique experience must have made him an acute observer of events. This consideration enhances the value of his testimony with regard to the history of his times, because in dealing with an age from which little contemporary evidence has survived, the best material we can hope to seize is the version of an intelligent observer, who had access to all court intrigues and himself lived in intimate contact with some of the principal personages who controlled the destinies of the country." (*Medieval Studies*, pp. 78-79.)

### **Muhammad-bin-Tughluq (1325-1351)**

Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq was succeeded by his son Prince Juna Khan who took up the title of Muhammad Tughluq. We are fortunate in having a lot of authentic and interesting material about his reign.

### **Sources**

(1) **Zia-ud-Din Barani** (born 1285) wrote his famous work **Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi** in the time of Firuz Shah Tughluq. He was a native of Barani in the Doab. His ancestors held high offices under the Khaljis. Qazi Ala-ul-Mulk, one of his uncles, was the Kotwal of Delhi in the time of Ala-ud-Din Khalji and was very much trusted by the Emperor. No wonder, the account of Barani regarding the reign of Ala-ud-Din has original value as it was based on the information given to Barani by Qazi Ala-ul-Mulk.

Barani himself spent seventeen years in the court of Muhammad Tughluq and also some years in that of Firuz Tughluq.

**Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi** of Barani was completed in 1359. It is a standard historical work on Medieval India. We are told that before writing his work, Barani took a vow that he would write nothing but the truth. No wonder, his account is trustworthy. Barani praises Ala-ud-Din for his achievements but condemns him for his cruel punishments. He has showered praises on Ghivas-ud-Din Tughluq, the founder of the Tughluq dynasty. He has described in detail the various events of the reign of Muhammad Tughluq. He has given us details about the taxation in the Doab, transfer of the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, the introduction of token currency, the various schemes of conquest of Muhammad Tughluq etc. Barani has also given some important information about the reign of Firuz Tughluq. However, it is to be noted that at times, chronology in the account of Barani is defective. Sometimes, he also brings in his personal prejudices. His account of the sufferings of the people of the Doab on account of high taxation by Muhammad Tughluq is obviously an exaggerated one.

Barani catches the thread of the narrative dropped by Minhaj Siraj. He begins with the history of the reign of Balban and ends with the first six years of the reign of Firuz Tughluq. Comparatively speaking, the reign of the Khaljis is more systematically treated than that of the Tughluqs. In the narrative of the Khaljis, chronological sequence of the events is maintained fairly accurately although the chronology is far from satisfactory. Although Barani refers very often to the sources of his information, he did not take full advantage of the works of his contemporaries while writing his *Tarikh*. Had he improved upon the drafts of his book after consulting Amir Khusro's *Miftah-ul-Fatuh*, Khazain-ul-Fatuh and Devalrani and Kabir-ud-Din's *Fatehnamah*, he would surely have given more reliable information on Ala-ud-Din's wars in Chittor, Ranthambhor and Malwa than the sketchy accounts to be found in his *Tarikh*. He does not refer to the episode of Devalrani at all. His account of the Deccan campaigns of Malik Kafur is extremely poor. Moreover, once he starts writing about the Deccan, he neglects the North altogether. He furnishes little information about events in Northern India from 1308 to 1313 particularly about wars in Jalor and Sevana. Moreover Barani finished his work at the advanced age of 74 when he was in a miserable condition. His financial difficulties made him bitter and disappointed. He was more likely to refer to the agonies of his soul than to sit down and improve his notes after comparing them with the works of Amir Khusro and other contemporary writers.

The sarcasm of Barani is incisive. Occasionally, his sardonic humour helps him to sum up his ideas in a few words. His remark that in Ala-ud-Din's days, a camel could be had for a Dang, shows that articles were cheap in the time of Ala-ud-Din. The stern attitude of Ala-ud-Din towards the revenue officials made them so unpopular that service in the revenue department was considered worse than plague. Nobody gave his daughter in marriage to a revenue clerk. The office of the Superintendent was accepted by one who had no

regard for life. The plight of the agriculturists was so bad that they sold their wives and children to pay the land revenue. The wives of the rich Zamindars (Khuts and Muqqaddams) worked in the houses of the Mussalmans for wages. The bazar people were the worst of all the 72 classes of people who inhabited the globe.

Barani had his likes and dislikes. He did not feel interested in the description of battles, tactics used in a particular engagement and such other points of military strategy. Whenever he was forced to give a description, he became very brief. However, he did pause to praise an act, a character or a motive. When he praised somebody, he praised him to heaven. When he condemned somebody, he wrote with his pen dipped in acid. In spite of this, his character sketches were excellently done. He was a philosopher-cum-historian and not an accurate historian always. His memory was prodigious.

It cannot be denied that the work of Barani is very valuable. Later historians have depended upon him for information and inspiration. Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad, Badaoni, Ferishta and Hajiuddabir have depended upon Barani for their account of the history of the period covered by him. Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad especially quotes him very often. At some places, he merely copies Barani. At other places, he tries to solve the problems left by Barani. Ferishta tries to analyse the passage in which Barani described the salaries of the soldiers fixed by Ala-ud-Din. Hajiuddabir throws fresh light on some questions not properly explained by Barani such as the age of Ala-ud-Din and the causes underlying the constant quarrels between Ala-ud-Din and the family of Jalal-ud-Din. Abdul Haq Dehlvi, the author of Akhbarul Akhyar, depends upon Barani completely for the biographical sketches of Nizam-ud-Din Auliya and other saints of the period.

In addition to Tarikhi-i-Firuz Shahi, Barani wrote Fatwa-i-Jahandari. This work does not refer to the events of any particular ruler. However, it contains the political ideals which must be pursued by the Muslim rulers in order to earn religious merit and the gratitude of the people.

He also wrote Salvat-i-Kabir, Sanai Muhammadi, Hasratnamah, Inayatnamah, Ma'asir-i-Saadat and a history of the Barmakides.

According to Dr. S.M. Haq, Barani "can claim superiority to many a historian of the Middle Ages in having made the scope of his book wider and more comprehensive as well as in his fearlessness in expressing the truth and condemning the actions of great men when necessary, and for a contemporary writer this is no mean virtue. His style is extremely simple and remarkably free from unnecessary exaggerations and embellishments. Sometimes he indulges in needless repetitions, but he is not guilty of concealing the drawbacks of great men by artificial expressions and phrases or over-drawn metaphors and similes. These virtues give him a most prominent place in the long list of medieval historians of India."



(2) Another interesting source of information is the account of his travels as given by **Ibn Batuta**, the Moorish traveller. He was born in 1304 A.D., and his original name was Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Batuta. However, he is commonly known as Ibn Batuta. He had a passion for travels. At the age of 21, he started his travels. After wandering through the countries of Africa and Asia, he came to India through the passes of the Hindukush. He reached the Indus on 12th September, 1333. He proceeded to Delhi where he was hospitably received. He was given 6 000 Tankas in cash. He was also given a grant of three villages within 30 miles of Delhi which gave him annual income of 5,000 Tankas and 10 Hindu slaves. Muhammad Tughluq was not in Delhi when Ibn Batuta reached there but when the Sultan came to Delhi in June 1334, Ibn Batuta went out to meet him. Ibn Batuta has described the kind manner in which he himself was received by the Emperor and the great respect shown to the foreigners. The latter were offered appointments. The revenue of two more villages was added to the grant of Ibn Batuta by the Sultan. He was offered the post of the Qazi of Delhi and he accepted the same after some hesitation when the Sultan agreed to appoint two assistants who were to perform the duties of the Qazi while Ibn Batuta was to enjoy the stipend. Ibn Batuta stayed in India for 8 years from 1334 to 1342. He was sent to China on a diplomatic mission but the same failed. After coming from China, he started from Malabar to the coast of Arabia and reached Fez in 1349. He put down in black and white all his experiences of his travels in his book called **Tuhfat-un-Nuzzar fi Gharaib-il-Amsar**. This work was finished in December 1355 and he died in 1377-78 A.D.

We have a lot of useful information from Ibn Batuta regarding Muhammad Tughluq and his times. As regards the Sultan, he tells us that "Muhammad is a man who, above all others, is fond of making presents and shedding blood. There may always be seen at his gate some poor persons becoming rich or some living one condemned to death. His generous and brave actions and his cruel and violent deeds have obtained notoriety among the people. In spite of this, he is the most humble of men, and the one who exhibits the greatest equity. The ceremonies of his religion are dear to his heart and he is very severe in respect of prayer and the punishment which follows its neglect." Ibn Batuta has given a catalogue of the atrocities committed by Muhammad Tughluq during his reign. Muhammad Tughluq got his brother Masud murdered on mere suspicion. Ibn Batuta also refers to a few instances of a fantastic display of reverence for abstract justice and forms of law by the Sultan. On one occasion, a Hindu complained to a Qazi that the Sultan had killed his brother without any cause. The Sultan appeared unarmed in the court and made his obeisance. He heard with humility and carried out the order of the Qazi asking him to pay compensation to the complainant. In another case, a Muslim complained that the Sultan had unjustly retained some of his property and the Sultan restored the property in compliance with the order of the Qazi. In another case, a youngman complained that the Sultan had arbitra-



rily caused him to be beaten without any rhyme or reason. It was found that the complaint was true and consequently in accordance with the Islamic law of retaliation, the youngman was allowed to have his revenge. A stick was placed in his hand and he was allowed to give 21 strokes to the Sultan. The head-dress of the Sultan fell on the ground.

Ibn Batuta also refers to the heavy punishments inflicted by the Sultan on the Shaikhs and Qazis. We are told that the Sultan slew both the small and the great and spared not the learned, pious or the nobles. Every day men in chains and fetters were brought to the council hall and some were led to executions, some to torture and some to scourging.

Ibn Batuta also refers to the various customs and "strange things" of India. He refers to the practice of Sati among the Hindus. He describes the postal system of those times. He refers particularly to the efficiency of the runners or Dawats who carried letters from one place to another with great speed.

There is no doubt about the fact that the account of India as given by Ibn Batuta is wholly reliable and in many respects the same is corroborated by Zia-ud-Din Barani. However, it cannot be denied that whatever he wrote, he wrote from memory. During his stay in India, he did not take down notes and consequently he is liable to make mistakes wherever memory fails him. Moreover, he did not write only those things which he saw personally. He even wrote about those things which he heard from his friends and others who came into contact with him.

(3) In addition to the account of Zia-ud-Din Barani and Ibn Batuta, we get welcome light from *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* by Shams-i-Siraj Afif, *Fatuhat-i-Firuz Shahi*, an autobiographical memoir of Firuz Shah Tughluq, *Munshat-i-Mahru* of Ain-ul-Mulk Multani, *Tughluqnamah* of Amir Khusro and *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* of Yahiya-bin-Ahmad Sarhindi.

### Early Life

Prince Juna Khan was the eldest son of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq. He was brought up as a soldier and he distinguished himself in the same. He was a precocious child. He was appointed the Master of the Horse of Khusro Shah. However, Juna Khan started an agitation against Khusro Shah, his patron. He helped his father in overthrowing Khusro Shah. When his father became the Emperor in 1320, Prince Juna Khan was appointed the heir-apparent and was also given the title of Ulugh Khan. He undertook two expeditions to Warangal in 1322 and 1323, and although he failed in the first, he succeeded in the second. He seated himself on the throne soon after the death of his father in 1325. For 40 days, he remained at Tughluqabad after which he marched to the city of Delhi and put himself in the Red Palace of Balban. Gold and silver coins were distributed among the people at the time of coronation.

## Domestic Policy

We can discuss the events of the reign of Muhammad Tughluq under two heads : his domestic policy and foreign policy.

(1) As regards domestic policy, Muhammad Tughluq began to look into the details of administration from the very beginning of his reign. He first ordered the compilation of a **register of the revenue and expenditure of the provinces of his kingdom**. The Governors of the provinces were required to send to Delhi all relevant records and other materials required for that purpose. The result was that summaries of income and expenditure came to Delhi from the various parts of the empire and the system worked smoothly.

## Taxation in the Doab

(2) The Sultan made an ill-advised financial experiment in the Doab between the Ganges and the Jamuna. He not only increased the rate of taxation but also revived and created some additional Abwabs or cesses. There are discrepancies and vagueness in the accounts of the contemporary and later Muslim writers with regard to the actual amount of assessment. Barani<sup>1</sup> says that taxes were increased 10 or 20 times more. Elliot has translated it as 10% or 5%. It is stated in **Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi** that the increase was twenty-fold and to this were added **Ghari** or house tax and the **Charahi** or pasture tax. According to Badauni, taxes were doubled. In these circumstances, it is not possible to determine accurately the actual amount of additional assessment. Some modern writers have suggested that the additional tax was not more than 50%. It is also contended that the object of the Sultan in levying these additional taxes on the people of the Doab was not punitive as suggested by Badauni and Sir Wolsley Haig, but to "increase his military resources and to organise the administration on an efficient basis." Whatever the truth, it cannot be denied that the measure entailed great hardships on the people of the Doab. Barani tells us that "the backs of the rayats were broken. Those who were rich became rebels : the lands were ruined and cultivation was arrested. Grain became dear, the rains were deficient and so famine became general. It lasted for years and thousands upon thousands of people perished." Dr. Ishwari Prasad points out that "unfortunately, this measure was carried out at a time when a severe famine was prevailing in the Doab, and the distress of the people was greatly aggravated by its disastrous effects. But this does not exonerate the Sultan altogether from blame : for his officials continued to levy taxes at the enhanced rate with the

1. Barani says, "The taxation in the Doab was increased ten and twenty times, and the royal officials consequently created such Abwabs or cesses and collected them with such rigour that the ryots were reduced to impotence, poverty and ruin. There were rebellions on all sides, the land was ruined, and cultivation was greatly diminished. All this produced a famine in Delhi and its neighbourhood and the Doab. Rains failed at the same time, and the famine continued for several years. Thousands of people perished, and when they tried to escape, the Sultan led punitive expeditions to various places and hunted them like wild beasts."

utmost rigour, and made no allowance for famine." The relief measures of the Sultan such as the giving of loans to the agriculturists, sinking of wells and "bringing the uncultivated lands under the plough by means of direct state management and financial support," came too late. The peasantry left their homes and shifted to other places. The Sultan was very much annoyed and he adopted very harsh measures to bring back the peasants to their original homes. However, all this had a very adverse effect so far as the future of the Tughluq dynasty was concerned.

(3) The Sultan created a new Department of Agriculture called *Diwan-i-Kohi*. The main object of this Department was to bring more land under cultivation by giving direct help to the peasants. A large tract of land measuring 60 miles square, was chosen for that purpose. Land was cultivated and different crops were grown in rotation. In two years the Government spent more than 70 lakhs. Land was given to those who were in need of it. Unfortunately, the experiment proved to be a failure. The land chosen for experiment was not fertile. The period of three years was too small to give any concrete results. The money was not properly spent and a large part of it was merely wasted.

#### **Transfer of Capital to Daulatabad (1327)**

(4) A very important experiment was made by the Sultan in shifting his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. Barani<sup>1</sup> points out that Daulatabad had a central situation and was nearly equidistant (700 miles) from Delhi, Gujarat, Lakhnauti, Talingana and other important places. The new capital had its strategic value. It was safe from Mongolian invasions which constantly threatened Delhi. The Sultan also did his best to make Daulatabad a suitable place for his officers and the people. All facilities were provided for those who were required to migrate to Daulatabad. A broad road was constructed for their convenience. Shady trees were planted on both sides of the road. A regular postal service was established between Delhi and Daulatabad.

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1. The account of Barani is in these words: "This second project of Sultan Muhammad, which was ruinous to the capital of the empire, and distressing to the chief men of the country, was that of making Deogir his capital, under the title of Daulatabad. This place held a central situation: Delhi, Gujarat, Lakhnauti, Satganw, Tilang, Ma 'bar, Dhursamundar, and Kampila were about equidistant from thence, there being but a slight difference in the distances. Without any consultation, and without carefully looking into the advantages and disadvantages on every side, he brought ruin upon Delhi, that city which, for 170 or 180 years, had grown in prosperity, and rivalled Baghdad and Cairo. The city with its sarais, and its suburbs and villages, spread over four or five kos. All was destroyed. So complete was the ruin that not a cat or a dog was left among the buildings of the city, in its palaces or in its suburbs. Troops of the natives, with their families and dependants, wives and children, men-servants and maid-servants, were forced to remove. The people, who for many years and for generations had been natives and inhabitants of the land were broken-hearted. Many, from the toils of the long journey, perished on the road, and those who arrived at Deogir could not endure the pain of exile. In despondency they pined to death. All around Deogir, which is infidel land, there sprang up graveyards of Mussulmans. The Sultan was bounteous in his liberality and favours to the emigrants, both on

(Continued on next page)



However, when the people of Delhi hesitated to shift to Daulatabad, the Sultan got annoyed and he ordered all people of Delhi to proceed to Daulatabad with their belongings. Ibn Batuta says that a blind man was dragged from Delhi to Daulatabad and a bed-ridden cripple was projected there by a ballista. Regarding the transfer of capital to Daulatabad, Barani observes thus: "Without consultation or weighing the pros and cons, he brought ruin on Delhi which for 170 to 180 years had grown prosperity and rivalled Baghdad and Cairo. The city with its Sarais and suburbs and villages spread over four or five leagues, all was destroyed (*i.e.*, deserted). Not a cat or a dog was left. Troops of the inhabitants with their families were forced to move broken-hearted; many perished on the road and those who reached Deogiri, unable to endure their exile, pined to death. All round Deogiri, an infidel land, spread graveyards of Muslims. The Sultan was bounteous to the emigrants both on the journey and arrival; but they were tender and could not suffer exile. They laid down their heads in that heathen land, and of the multitudes, few lived to return to their native home."

The Sultan realised the folly of his experiment and ordered a return march of the people. The result was that those few who had survived from journey to Daulatabad also died on their return journey.

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their journey and on their arrival; but they were tender, and they could not endure the exile and suffering. They laid down their heads in that heathen land, and of all the multitudes of emigrants, few only survived to return to their home. Thus this city, the envy of the cities of the inhabited world, was reduced to ruin."

According to Ibn Batuta, "One of the most serious reprehensions against the Sultan is that he forced the inhabitants of Delhi into exile. The cause of it was this. They used to write letters containing abuses and scandals, and they would seal the letters writing on the cover—'By the head of His Majesty none except he should read the letter'. These letters they used to throw into the council hall in the course of the night. When he tore them open, he found abuses and scandals in the contents. So he resolved to lay Delhi waste. He bought the houses and dwellings from all the inhabitants of Delhi and paid the price for them. Then he ordered the inhabitants to leave Delhi and move on to Daulatabad, but they refused to do so. Thereupon his crier went forth proclaiming that no one should remain in Delhi after three days. As a result, most of the people went away; but some concealed themselves in their houses. The Sultan ordered a search for those who still lingered; and in the lanes of the city his slaves lighted upon two men—one being a cripple and the other a blind man. Both were brought to the court and the Sultan ordered the cripple to be thrown up in the air by means of the ballista (*minjaniq*) and the blind man to be dragged from Delhi to Daulatabad—a distance of forty days' journey. He was torn to pieces on the way, and only a leg of his reached Daulatabad. When the Sultan had done that, all the inhabitants of Delhi came out leaving behind their property and baggage, and the city was reduced to a desert. I was informed on reliable authority that in the night the Sultan mounted the roof of his palace and looked round Delhi. When neither a light nor even a smoke or a lamp came into sight he remarked, 'Now my heart is pleased and my soul is at rest'. Then he wrote to the inhabitants of other provinces to repair to Delhi to repeople it. As a result, those provinces were destroyed, but Delhi was not re-peopled on account of its vastness and immensity. It is one of the greatest cities of the world, and when we entered it we found it in the state above referred to; it was empty and was but scantily inhabited."



The net result of this experiment was that Delhi lost its former prosperity and grandeur. It is true that the Sultan "brought learned men and gentlemen, tradesmen and land-owners into the city of Delhi from certain towns in his territory and made them reside there," but when Ibn Batuta came to Delhi in 1334 he found certain parts of Delhi still deserted. According to Lane-Poole, "Daulatabad was a monument of misdirected energy." According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, it is doubtful if the transfer of capital to Daulatabad would have helped the Sultan to keep a firm hold upon the different parts of the empire. The Sultan did not see that Daulatabad was situated at a long distance from the northern frontiers of the empire and those required to be constantly watched. He disregarded the warning that the Hindu revolts and the Mongol invasions might imperil his empire at any time. If such a contingency had arisen, the Sultan would have failed to meet the same.

Dr. Syed Moinul Haq refers to the various statements of Barani and points out that the Sultan had ordered the emigration of the upper classes only who were comprised of the Ulema, the Mashakh courtiers, commanders of the army and the civilians of rank. It is beyond doubt that Delhi was not evacuated in entirety. The frequent references of Barani and other writers to the destruction of Delhi simply mean the loss of its prosperity which, according to them, was mainly due to the presence of those distinguished families. When Barani says that not even a dog or cat was left in the city and its suburbs, he merely emphasises the point that emigration was on a large scale and affluence and prosperity had disappeared to a great extent. If his phrases were to be understood literally, he would be guilty of making contradictory statements. There was no meaning in the Sultan bringing the nobles and Ulemas from provincial towns if Delhi had been converted into a wilderness where neither a cat nor a dog could be seen. Moreover, the statement of Barani that it was a calamity for the selected few and not the masses, is borne out by documentary and circumstantial evidence. Two Sanskrit inscriptions dated 1327 and 1328 A.D. confirm this view and establish the prosperity of the Hindus of Delhi and its vicinity at that time. One of them "records the foundation of a well by a Brahman of the name of Srinidhara at the village of Nadayana, the modern Naraina, near Delhi." The verses of this inscription speak of Muhammad bin Tughluq as "the mighty Saka Lord" and throw light on the favourable conditions in which the Hindu families of Delhi lived. The second inscription found at the village of Sarbar, five miles from Delhi, also refers to the prosperity of a Hindu family. These inscriptions, read with Barani's remarks about the "misery of the selected people", lead to the inference that Sultan Muhammad's orders for migration applied to the leading Mussalman families only. This is also supported by Barani's references to heavy casualties in these words: "And on all sides of the old infidel land of Deogiri, there sprang up graveyards of the Mussalmans."

This view is also supported by the stray references made by the editors and compilers of the *Malfuzat* of the Sufi saints. Their study reveals the incontestable fact that the Sultan wanted only

the Mussalman nobles, the Ulema and the Mashaikh to go to Deogir because his scheme was to have a large population of his co-religionists in the Deccan and thus eliminate the possibility of the success of frequent rebellions of the Hindus. That could be achieved through migration and conversion and those appear to be the motives of the Sultan in sending the distinguished Ulema, the leading Mashaikh and other influential Muslim families to Deogir and raising that city to the status of a capital. He knew that his stay there, for some time at least, was as essential as that of the Shaikhs and Ulema. His scheme of planting a strong colony of the Mussalmans at Deogir and making it the centre of his political activities as well as the missionary work of the Ulema is clearly referred to by the author of the *Seirul Aulia* who was a contemporary of the Sultan and whose family had migrated to Delhi. In his chapter on Sultan's interview with Maulana Fakhr-ud Din Zarradi, Amir Khurd says : "At the time when Sultan Mohammad Tughluq had sent the people of Delhi to Deogir and wanted to conquer Khorasan and Turkistan and overthrow the descendants of Changiz Khan, he convened a meeting of all the Sadrs and leading persons of Delhi and its suburbs who had assembled in the city, under a huge tent. He had ordered the setting up of a dias so that he might stand on it and address them in order to induce them to be ready for **Jahad**." Amir Khurd also says that both his father and Maulana Fakhr-ud-Din were sent to Deogir.

It is also pointed out that Maulana Fakhr-ud-Din wanted to go to Mecca. He consulted his friend Qazi Kamaluddin of Deogir. The latter warned him that it would be impolitic to go there without the permission of the Sultan because the Sultan was anxious to populate Deogir and enhance its glory and reputation by the presence of the Ulema, the Mashaikh and the Sadrs. Besides these, other Shaikhs are also stated to have migrated to the Deccan. Shaikh Burhan-ud-Din, a Khalifa of Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din Aulia and the famous poet Amir Hassan can be mentioned as examples. Makhdoom-i-Jahan, the mother of the Sultan, also migrated to Deogir.

Dr. Sayed Moinul Haq further points out that the greatest misconception in regard to the scheme have arisen from the error in interpreting in too literal a sense the phrase "Destruction of Delhi" which Barani and other contemporaries seem to have used only as a metaphor in order to impress upon their readers the magnitude of calamity. Ibn Batuta who visited Delhi six years after the emigration testifies to the greatness and prosperity of Delhi. He tells us that Delhi was the biggest town of the East, had beautiful massive buildings, was surrounded by a wall, the like of which could not be found anywhere in the world and covered an extensive area which was all populated. It consisted of four different towns, *viz.*, Old Delhi of the Hindus, Siri of Ala-ud-Din, Tughluqabad and Jahanpanah. The view of Dr. Haq is that the population of Delhi was not evacuated in entirety and the Sultan never intended to make Deogir its substitute. What he seems to have

in his mind was to make Delhi a stronghold of his power by converting it into a large colony of the Mussalmans. It would have been unwise on his part to have openly proclaimed that he could not depend upon the people of the Deccan and wanted a large Muslim population to support his Government. Hence he tried to justify his scheme by seemingly harmless arguments and gave out that he wanted to set up his capital at Daulatabad because it was situated in the centre of his dominions. It was not a case of mere transfer of the capital as is proved by his anxiety not to let Delhi fall into obscurity. His efforts to bring Ulema and Shaikhs from provincial towns and make them settle down in that city gave a clue to his true intentions in spite of the official version which Barani seems to have stated. Barani complains that the Sultan did not consult his adviser on this question, but consultation could result in the leaking out of the true purpose of the scheme and might have hampered its success.

Dr. Haq points out that for two decades, the Deccan Kingdoms had been under the suzerainty of Delhi, but their submission did not go beyond their sending presents and tributes occasionally. They could throw off their allegiance with the appearance of the slightest symptom of weakness in the Central Government. Ala-ud-Din Khalji had remained contented with these unsatisfactory arrangements because his hands were full with the problems of the North. Muhammad Tughluq found himself in a better position and, therefore, decided to bring the Deccan within the orbit of his direct rule. For that, he required a tolerably large population of Mussalmans upon whose support he could rely at any difficult time. He was fully conscious of the fact that in crushing the supremacy of the Hindu States in the Deccan, he would have to face tremendous opposition and nothing would be more foolish than to rely upon sheer force for the permanent subjugation of those territories. By making Daulatabad the centre of a vast Mussalman colony in the South, Muhammad Tughluq was trying to achieve what can be called in modern phraseology "a peaceful penetration."

Dr. Haq concludes thus : "Sultan Muhammad's project of the so-called transference of the capital was in reality a novel experiment in the administrative history of India, and was a peculiar invention of his ingenious mind. It has been generally held that it was a disastrous failure, but we cannot ignore the fact that the foundation and maintenance of independent Mussalman Kingdom in the Deccan would not have been possible if he had not planted a strong Muslim colony there." (Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Seventh Session held at Madras in 1944, p. 276)

### **The Currency Experiment (1329-30)**

(6) Edward Thomas has described Muhammad Tughluq as "a prince of monevers." He points out that one of the earliest acts of his reign was to remodel the coinage, to re-adjust its divisions to the altered values of the precious metals and to originate new and more exact representative of the subordinate circula-



tion." A new gold coin weighing 200 grains and called **Dinar** by Ibn Batuta, was issued by Muhammad Tughluq. He revived the **Adali** coin containing 140 grains of silver in place of the old gold and silver coins weighing 175 grains. This change was probably due to a "fall in the relative value of gold to silver, the imperial treasury having been replenished by large quantities of the former metal as a result of the campaigns of the Deccan."

In 1329 and 1330, the Sultan issued a token currency in copper coins. There were already examples of such a currency in China and Persia. Kublai Khan, the Mongol Emperor of China, had introduced a paper currency in China towards the close of the 13th century. Gai Khatai, the ruler of Persia, made a similar experiment in 1294 A.D. With these examples before him, Muhammad Tughluq issued a decree proclaiming that in all transactions, copper tokens should be accepted as legal tender like gold and silver coins. According to Barani, "This edict turned the house of every Hindu into a mint and the Indians of the provinces coined lakhs and crores of copper coins, with which they paid their tribute and bought horses and arms and fine things of all sorts. The Rais, the village headmen and land-owners grew rich on these copper coins but the state was impoverished. In no long time distant countries would only accept the copper Tanka as metal, and in places where reverence for the edict prevailed the gold Tanka rose to be worth a 100 copper **Tankas**. Every goldsmith struck copper coins in his workshop and the treasury was crammed with them. They fell so low that they were no more valuable than pebbles or potsherds. Trade being disrupted, the Sultan repealed his edict and in great wrath proclaimed that all the copper coins should be redeemed in gold or silver at the treasury. Thousands brought them for exchange and their heaps rose up in Tughluqabad like mountains." Barani tells us that the experiment was due to two causes. The first cause was the need of money to maintain the great army of conquest numbering 3,70,000. The second cause was the deficiency in the treasury caused by the lavish gifts made by the Sultan. Another probable cause can be the relative scarcity of silver in the market. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, another probable cause was the love of experiment on the part of the Sultan who was a man of original cast of mind, well-versed in the arts and sciences of the age. The Sultan might have felt a powerful impulse for the experiment in a scientific spirit. The royal exhortations which accompanied the introduction of the currency and the subsequent behaviour of the Sultan effectively rebut the charge of eccentricity which has been brought against him by modern writers.

Many reasons have been given for the failure of this monetary experiment of Muhammad Tughluq. It is pointed out that this carefully organised measure failed because it was in advance of the time and the people could not realise its real importance. To the people at large in those days, brass was brass and copper was copper, however urgent the needs of the state might be. Another



cause of the failure of the experiment was that the Sultan could not make the issue of the copper coins a monopoly of the State. To quote Edward Thomas, "There was no special machinery to mark the difference of the fabric of the royal mint and the handiwork of a moderately skilled artisan. Unlike the precautions taken to prevent the imitation of the Chinese paper notes, there was positively no check upon the authenticity of the copper tokens and no limits to the power of the production by the masses at large." The contention of Elphinstone was that the failure of the token currency was due to the insolvency of the king and the instability of his government. This contention has been found to be groundless as the Sultan successfully withdrew all coins by paying gold and silver coins for the copper tokens. Had the Sultan been insolvent, he would not have been able to give gold and silver coins in exchange. Brown attributed this currency muddle to the shortage in the supply of the silver in the world during the 14th century. There was a similar scarcity of coins in England in the reign of Edward III about the year 1335. Similar difficulties were experienced in other countries.

About the token currency, Sir Wolseley Haig says that Mohd Tughluq understood the principles of a managed currency and he did not believe, as is suggested by some historians ignorant of those principles, that his command could raise the value of the baser to that of the precious metal. Success might have been possible if the measure had been efficiently supervised but unfortunately, no steps were taken to prevent fraud and hence it failed.

### **Liberal Administration**

Muhammad Tughluq was a learned man and he refused to accept the dictates of the Ulemas in all matters. The four legal taxes were Kharaj, Zakat, Jazya and Khamisa but Muhammad Tughluq levied many taxes in addition to them. Muhammad Tughluq was not a religious bigot and consequently he showed greater respect for the sentiments of the Hindus than was done by his predecessor or his successor. He tried to stop the practice of Sati. Independent Rajput states were left undisturbed and this was not liked by the clerical party. He deprived the clerical party of its monopoly of the administration of justice. He made himself the highest court of appeal and whenever he differed from the Muftis, he over-ruled them and acted according to his own view. Judicial powers were given to some of the distinguished officers of the state although they were not Qazis or Muftis. Mubaraq Khan, the brother of Muhammad Tughluq, sat along with the Qazi in the Diwan-i-Khana to help him in disposing of cases. Some of the members of the clerical party were severely punished by the Sultan as they were found guilty of rebellion, open sedition or embezzlement of funds. The clerical party could not be expected to be like a ruler who was prepared to punish even the Shaikhs and Saiyyads who were considered to be sacred by the Muslim rulers.

Muhammad Tughluq believed that he was the shadow of God. Some of the inscriptions on his coins read as "Sovereignty is not conferred upon every man, but is placed on the elect." "He who obeys the Sultan truly obeys God." "The Sultan is the shadow of God" and "God is the supporter of the Sultan." He dropped all references to the Khalifa.

However, when he became very unpopular, he changed his attitude towards the Khalifa and requested the Khalifa of Egypt to confirm him as the Sultan of Delhi. He substituted the name of the Khalifa on his coins in place of his own name. All royal orders were issued in the name of the Khalifa. In 1344, Muhammad Tughluq received Haji Said Sarsari, the envoy sent by the Khalifa of Egypt. The envoy was received with the highest honours. The Sultan, all the great officers of the state, the Savyids, holy and learned men, and all who could pretend to any importance, went out of Delhi to meet the envoy. The Sultan walked barefooted as the envoy approached and kissed his feet several times. Triumphant arches were erected in the city and alms were lavishly distributed. The utterances of the envoy were recorded and repeated as though they had been inspired. To quote Barani, "Without the Caliph's command, the king scarcely ventured to drink a draught of water." In spite of this, Muhammad Tughluq did not regain the loyalty and confidence of his people. He remained as unpopular as ever.

### Foreign Policy

(1) The Delhi Sultanate was not free from external dangers during the reign of Muhammad Tughluq. In 1328-29, Tarmashirin Khan, the Chaghatai chief of Transoxiana, invaded India. He ravaged the country from Multan and Lahore to the outskirts of Delhi. It appears that the change of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad and the neglect of the defence of the North-Western frontier by Muhammad Tughluq encouraged the Mongols to attack the country. There is a difference of opinion among writers regarding the outcome of the invasion. Yahiya-bin-Ahmad and Badauni tell us that Muhammad Tughluq defeated the Mongols and drove them out of the country. However, Ferishta says that Muhammad Tughluq bribed the invaders and they retired. The gold and jewels given by the Sultan to the invaders have been described "as the price of the kingdom." Whatever the truth, "the invasion was no more than a raid, and Tarmashirin disappeared as suddenly as he had come."

(2) Muhammad Tughluq had visions of universal conquest. He decided to conquer **Khurasan** and Iraq and mobilized a huge army for the purpose. He was encouraged to do so by the Khurasani nobles who had taken shelter in his court. They had also their own axe to grind. Zia-ud-Din Barani tells us that as many as 3,70,000 men were enrolled in the Diwan-i-Arz or the office of muster master. They were paid for full one year by the state. It cannot be denied that there was instability in Khurasan on account of the unpopular rule of Abu Said and Muhammad Tughluq could certainly take advantage of the same. However, it cannot be ignored that the position of Muhammad Tughluq was not very stable in India

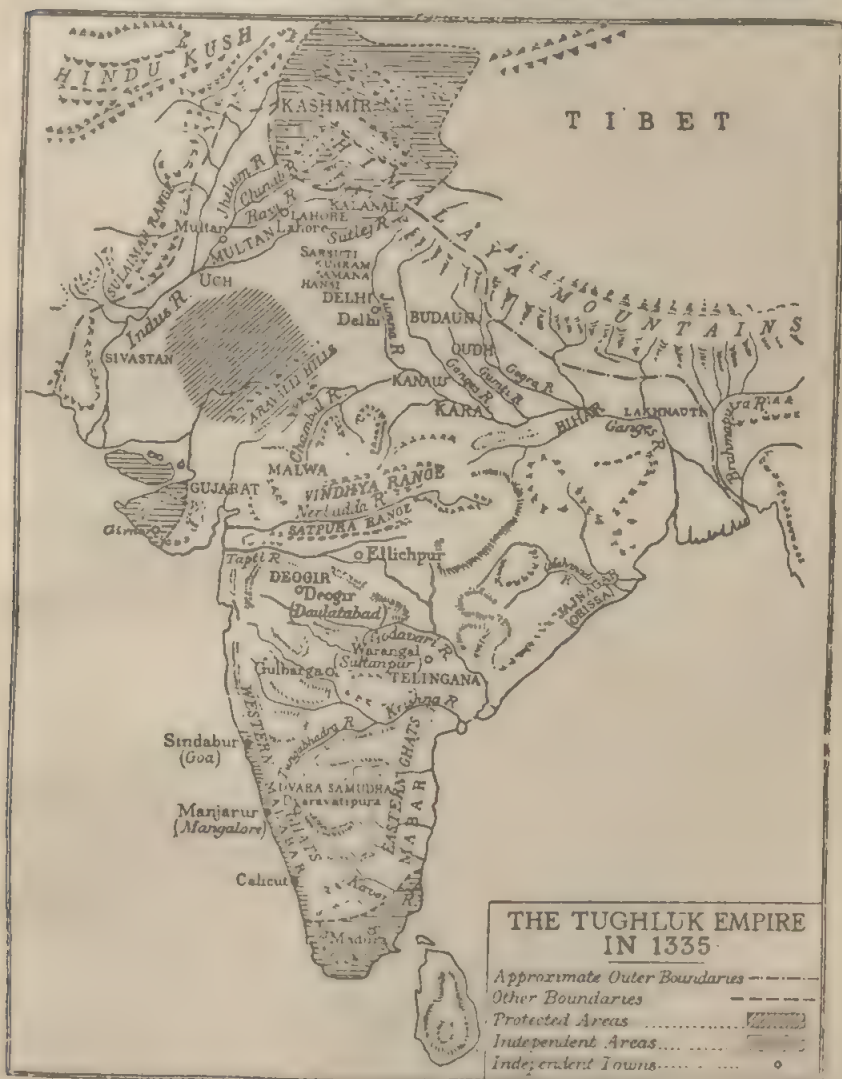
itself and consequently it was foolish on his part even to think of conquering foreign lands. Moreover, he did not take into consideration the problem of transport. The difficulties of geography were also ignored. It was completely forgotten that it was not an easy task to send such a huge army through the passes of the Himalayas or the Hindukush and also to provide for their food and other necessities in such a distant land. Moreover, the Muslim soldiers of India would not have been a match for the hardy hordes of Central Asia. Muhammad Tughluq could not have depended upon the help of the Sultan of Egypt and Tarmashirin Khan. They had their own interests to serve than to help Muhammad Tughluq. It has rightly been said that the scheme was impolitic in the highest degree from every point of view and no wonder the same was abandoned. Zia-ud-Din Barani observes thus: "The coveted countries were not acquired. And his treasure which is the true source of political power, was expended."

(3) The fort of **Nagarkot** was situated on a hill in the Kangra district of the Punjab. It had defied every Turkish army from the time of Mahmud Ghazni. It had not been conquered during the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khalji. In 1337, Muhammad Tughluq led an expedition against Nagarkot. The Hindu Raja offered resistance but was forced to submit. However, the fort was restored to him.

(4) Following the lead of Ferishta, many writers of Indian history have wrongly maintained that Muhammad Tughluq sent an expedition against China. However, it is clearly stated by Zia-ud-Din Barani and Iban Batuta that Muhammad Tughluq intended to capture the mountain of **Karajal** which lies between the territories of Hind (India) and those of China. Ibn Batuta tells us that the Karajal mountain was situated at a distance of 10 stages from Delhi. It appears that the expedition was directed against some refractory tribes in the Kumaon-Garhwal region with the object of bringing them under the Delhi Sultanate. A huge army was sent in 1337-38 for the purpose. The first attack was a success, but when the rainy season set in, the invaders suffered terribly. The entire baggage of the army was plundered by the mountaineers. According to Zia-ud-Din Barani only 10 horsemen came back to tell the story of the disaster. However, Ibn Batuta gives the number as 3. In spite of this failure, the object of the expedition was achieved. The hillmen realised the folly of defiance and came to terms with the Sultan by agreeing to pay him tribute.

(5) **Bengal** had never been oval to the Delhi Sultanate. Fakhr ud-Din, the armour-bearer of 'Bahram Khan, Governor of Eastern Bengal, killed his master and usurped his territory in 1336-37. Qadr Khan Governor of Lakhnauti, marched against him, but was himself killed. Fakhr ud-Din took advantage of the difficulties of Muhammad Tughluq and declared himself an independent ruler of Bengal. He also got coins struck in his own name. As there was no interference from Delhi, Fakhr ud-Din was able to consolidate his position and Bengal became prosperous under his rule. The

prices of foodstuffs and other necessities of life were so low that people from Persia called Bengal a "hell crammed with good things."



(6) Ain-ul-Mulk Multani was the Governor of Oudh. He was a loyal officer, a great soldier and a man of letters. He was responsible for the suppression of the revolt of Nizam Mulk of Kara. When there was famine in Oudh, he sent 70 to 80 lakhs of Tankas worth of grain. In spite of these services, he was ordered to go to Daulatabad in 1340-41 to put down disturbances there. Ain-ul-Mulk considered it as a diplomatic transportation to weaken his position and prestige in Oudh. He requested the Sultan not to send



him to the Deccan but as the latter persisted, he revolted. However, he was defeated and taken a prisoner. He was dismissed from his post and was made to put up with great humiliations. As the Sultan was convinced that Ain-ul-Mulk was a half-hearted rebel, his life was spared and he was made the keeper of the royal gardens at Delhi.

(7) Taking advantage of the instability in the empire, brigandage grew to threatening proportions in Sind. Muhammad Tughluq led an expedition against them in person. The ruffians were scattered. Their leaders were captured and forced to embrace Islam.

(8) Harihar, an enterprising Hindu leader, found the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar in 1336. He also gave help to Krishna Naik, son of Prataparuda Kakatiya, when the latter revolted against Muhammad Tughluq in 1343-44. Warangal was captured by Ballala II and its Muslim governor, Imad-ul-Mulk, ran away to Daulatabad. According to Ferishta, "Belal Deo and Krishna Naik both combined their forces and delivered Mabbar and Dwarsamudra from Muslim control. On all sides the flames of war and rebellion were kindled and of the distant provinces nothing remained in the possession of the Sultan except Gujarat and Deogiri."

(9) Qutluq Khan was the Governor of **Daulatabad**. A lot of public revenue was embezzled by his subordinates and therefore Muhammad Tughluq decided to send Ain-ul-Mulk Multani to Daulatabad. That could not be done on account of the revolt of Ain-ul-Mulk. In spite of this, Qutluq Khan was called back from Daulatabad. However, the situation did not improve. According to Ferishta, "The people disgusted at the removal of Qutluq Khan and the want of capacity displayed by the new administration, rebelled in all quarters and the country was devastated and depopulated in consequence."

(10) Aziz Khummar had been appointed the Governor of **Malwa** and Dhar by Muhammad Tughluq. His attitude towards the nobles was objectionable and consequently they revolted. The Governor caught hold of 80 such nobles and got them beheaded in front of his palace with a view to terrorise others. This was too much and there was trouble everywhere. Aziz Khummar was captured and put to "an ignominious death".

(11) The Sultan could not tolerate the defiance of his authority and consequently marched into **Gujarat** at the head of an army and destroyed all that fell into his hands. At that time, news came of a rebellion in Deogiri and Muhammad Tughluq marched towards Deogiri. There the Afghans, Turks and Hindus had made common cause against the Sultan but the latter was able to recover Daulatabad from the rebels. While in Daulatabad, Muhammad Tughluq heard of another revolt in Gujarat. The leader of the revolt was Taghi, a common shoe-maker and slave of a Muslim nobleman. He was able to bring under his command all the discontented elements. He successfully occupied and plundered places like Nehrwalla, Cambay and Broach. However, Muhammad Tughluq was successful in driving out Taghi from Gujarat and the latter took refuge in Sind. Things were brought to normal in Gujarat.

(12) When Muhammad Tughluq was in Gujarat, the foreign Amirs made a vigorous effort to recover their position and besieged the fort of Deogiri. All attempts of the imperialists to re-capture it failed. Imad-ud-Mulk was defeated by Hasan Gangu and the rebels occupied Daulatabad. Ismail Mulk whom the rebels had chosen as their king "voluntarily and gladly" resigned in favour of Hasan Gangu. Hasan took up the title of Ala-ud-Din Bahman Shah in August 1347 and founded the Bahmani Kingdom.

(13) Taghi had taken refuge in Sind and Muhammad Tughluq decided to proceed against him. However, on the way, the Sultan fell ill at Gondal and was obliged to halt for some time. After partial recovery, he proceeded towards Thatta in Sind. When he was about 3 or 4 days' march from that place, his condition became grave and he died on 20th March 1351. Badauni observes thus : **"And so the king was freed from his people and they from their king."**

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "Among the Amirs who crowded his camp, he looked about for support to buttress up his tottering power, but they were all mediocrities without any plan or policy and could render him but little assistance. What seriously hampered him was the lack of capable governors and officers to carry into effect his plans. The inefficiency of the men on the spot emphasised the importance of the personal factor to such an extent that the Sultan's presence became necessary to restore order in the disturbed areas. The local administrations, paralysed by persistent opposition and mismanagement, could make no stand against the rebels whose power was daily increasing. Neither at Devagiri nor in Gujarat the local administration displayed any vigour to check the forces of disorder and the Sultan alone had to bear the brunt of the opposition. The imperial army, too, does not seem to have shown any remarkable efficiency; probably the unusual severities of the Sultan had exhausted its patience and chilled its enthusiasm." (*Quraunah Turks*, p. 247.)

### Character and Estimate of Muhammad Tughluq

There is a lot of controversy regarding the character and achievements of Muhammad Tughluq. Elphinstone was of the view that Muhammad Tughluq was affected by some degree of insanity and writers like Havell, Edward Thomas and Smith have followed him. Gardiner Brown has ignored altogether the dark aspect of the life of Muhammad Tughluq and has absolved him of the charges of madness, blood-thirstiness and of being a visionary. Zia-ud-Din Barani and Ibn Batuta have opposite views about the personality, virtues and faults of Muhammad Tughluq. The controversy is as fresh as ever.

Muhammad Tughluq was one of the most learned and accomplished scholars of his time and no wonder he has been praised by his contemporaries. He had a keen intellect and a wonderful memory. He knew logic, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and physical sciences. He was a perfect master of composition and style. He was a brilliant calligraphist. He had a very good knowledge of

Persian poetry and took pleasure in quoting verses from Persian poetry in his letters. He knew medicine and was skilful in dialectics. He was an expert in the use of similes and metaphors. Zia ud-Din Barani describes him as a learned scholar, a veritable wonder of creation whose abilities would have taken by surprise even Aristotle and Asaf. He was generous. He gave lot of gifts to all those who crowded his gate at all times. His habits were simple. He was free from the prevailing vices of the age. Ibn Batuta describes him "as the most humble of men and one who is most inclined towards doing what is right and just." Barani, Yahya-bin-Ahmed Sarhindi, Badauni, Nizam-ud-Din Ahmed and Ferishta have wrongly stated that Muhammad Tughluq was not a religious person and he was responsible for the slaughter of the pious and the learned persons. Ibn Batuta positively asserts that "He (Muhammad Tughluq) follows the principles of religion with devoutness and performs the prayers himself and punishes those who neglect them." Ibn Batuta is supported by two other contemporary writers, namely, Shihab ud Din Ahmed and Badr-i-Chach. It appears that the only fault of Muhammad Tughluq was that "he ignored the canon of law" as expounded by the Qazi and other Muslim divines and did what he considered to be just and proper.

According to Ibn Batuta, "Notwithstanding all his modesty, his sense of equity and justice, and his extraordinary liberality and kindness to the poor that we have described, he had immense daring (sic) to shed blood. His gate was hardly free from the corpse of a man who had been executed. And I used to see frequently a number of people killed at the gate of the royal palace and the corpses abandoned there. One day as I arrived there my horse was startled, and as I looked round I saw on the earth some white thing. 'What is it?' said I. One of my comrades replied, 'It is the torso of a man who has been cut into three pieces.'

"The Sultan used to punish all wrongs whether big or small and he would spare neither the men of learning (Ahl-ul'ilm) and probity (Salah), nor those of high descent (Sharaf). Every day hundreds of people in chains with their hands fastened to the neck and their feet tightened were brought into the council hall.

"Those who were to be killed were killed and those who were to be tortured were tortured and those who were to be beaten were beaten..... May God save us from the calamity!"

Muhammad Tughluq had a lot of imagination but he lacked practical judgment and commonsense. He was hasty and hot tempered. He could not tolerate any opposition from any quarter and was ready to punish all those who dared to defy him or differ from him. According to Zia-ud-Din Barani, "Whatever he conceived, he considered good, but in enforcing his schemes, he lost territories, disgusted his people and emptied his treasury. Embarrassment followed embarrassment and confusion became worse confounded. The ill-feeling of the people gave rise to out-breaks and revolts. The rules for enforcing the royal schemes grew daily more oppressive. The tribute of most of the distant countries and provinces was lost and



many of the soldiers and servants were scattered and left in remote lands. Deficiency appeared in the treasury. The mind of the Sultan lost its balance. In the extreme weakness and harshness of his temper, he abandoned himself to severity. When he found that his orders did not work so well as he wished, he became yet more embittered against his people."

Muhammad Tughluq declared to Barani: "My kingdom is diseased and no treatment cures it. The physician cures the headache and fever follows; he strives to allay the fever and something else supervenes. So in my kingdom disorders have broken out; if I suppress them in one place, they appear in another; if I allay them in one district, another becomes disturbed." Again, "I visit them with chastisement upon the suspicion or presumption of their rebellious and treacherous designs and I punish the most trifling act of contumacy with death. This I will do until I die or until the people act honestly and give up rebellion and contumacy. I have no such Wazir as will make rules to obviate my shedding blood. I punish the people because they have all at once become my enemies and opponents. I have dispensed great wealth among them, but they have not become friendly and loyal." Again, "My remedy for rebels is the sword. I employ punishment and use the sword so that a cure may be effected by suffering. The more the people resist, the more I inflict chastisement."

Muhammad Tughluq has been described as "a mixture of opposites." If he had his virtues, he had his faults also. While he was kind, generous and humble, he was also most cruel. While he gave gifts to all those who came to him, he was responsible for the deaths of many. The temperament of the Sultan was such that nobody was sure as to what he would get. It was possible that he might get something in charity. It was equally possible that he might be hanged. He did not bother about the sentiments of the people. He had no balance or patience. He had no sense of proportion and no wonder he failed.

Muhammad Tughluq has been described as an amazing compound of contradictions. Dr. Ishwari Prasad points out that the charges of blood-thirstiness and madness are mostly unfounded. No contemporary writer has stated anything from which it can be concluded that Muhammad Tughluq was mad. It is possible that Elphinstone and other European writers were misled by the statement of Ibn Batuta that some dead bodies were always found in front of the palace of the Sultan. If he inflicted the penalty of death even for petty offences, that was due to the fact that he had no sense of proportion and also because such was the custom prevailing in Europe and Asia at that time. The charge of blood-thirstiness was levelled against the Sultan by the members of the clerical party. Barani has condemned the rationalism of the Sultan. In very strong language, he condemns his philosophical speculations. There is nothing to show that the Sultan took pleasure in the destruction of human species and organised man-hunts. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "The truth is that the Sultan combined a headstrong temper with



advanced ideals of administrative reforms, and when his people failed to respond to his wishes, his wrath became terrible. His impatience was the result of popular apathy, just as popular apathy was the outcome of his startling innovations." (*Medieval India*, p. 272.)

According to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, "No ruler in medieval India has evoked so much discussion concerning his policy and character as Muhammad Tughluq. Muslim chroniclers, without exception, describe him as a blood-thirsty tyrant and severely condemn his various measures. It has also been held by many modern historians that he was a bloody-thirsty tyrant almost verging on insanity, whose policy ruined the Sultanate of Delhi. In recent times, however, some reputed historians have challenged this almost universal belief of both scholars and laymen and sought to exonerate his character. The truth, as usual, perhaps lies midway between the two extremes, and Muhammad Tughluq's character was probably a mixture of opposites. It must be admitted that he had many good qualities of head and heart, while his cruelties were shocking and horrid, and he showed a capricious temper and a sad lack of judgment and commonsense on many occasions. We may, therefore, begin by a general description of both the good and bad qualities of Muhammad Tughluq. (*The Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 80-81.)

Again, "It would appear from what has been said above that although the current view about Mohammad Tughluq was not true to the whole extent, the attempts of some recent historians to exonerate him from all blemishes have not proved successful. He was not a monster or a lunatic, as has been suggested by some, but there is no doubt that he was a mixture of opposites, for his many good qualities of head and heart seem to be quite incompatible with certain traits of vices in his character, such as revolting cruelty, frivolous caprice, and an inordinate belief in his own view of things. He might have had good ideas but he had not the capacity to execute them. This was best exemplified in his ambitious projects like change of capitals, issue of token currency and foreign expeditions, and the appointment of new classes of officials. All these indicate a want of judgment which is undoubtedly a great defect in the character of a ruler, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that his character and policy largely contributed to the decline of the Delhi Empire." (*Ibid*, p. 87.)

According to Gardiner Brown, "That he was mad is a view of which contemporaries give no hint: that he was a visionary, his many-sided, practical and vigorous character forbids us to believe. To call him a despot may be true, but no other form of government was conceivable in the Middle Ages: to use the term as though it were the name of a vice or a disease is to ignore the fact that a despotic prince who is accessible to new ideas or who embarks on measures of reform can do much to advance the prosperity of his people in an age when education is but little advanced and conservatism deeply rooted. Such a ruler, however, has in his own time series of difficulties to face: the inevitable disturbance of vested interests, the innate preference for established custom, raise up for him numerous enemies:

officials carrying out unpopular reforms shelter themselves beneath the plea of the master's orders : should unmerited disaster befall his schemes, should corrupt or incompetent officials pervert their ends, it is he — because he is a despot — who must bear the blame if he has been a warrior and Death finds him when engaged on some small campaign — like Muhammad bin Tughluq beneath the walls of Thatta — the judgment of Heaven is cited to confirm the popular verdict, and literature records :

“He left a name at which the world grew pale

To point a moral or adorn the tale.”

According to Lane-Poole, “Muhammad Tughluq was the most striking figure in medieval India. He was a man with ideas far beyond his age. Ala-ud-Din had brought a vigorous but uncultivated mind to bear upon the problems of government ; Muhammad Tughluq was even more daring in his plans, but they were the ideals of a man of trained intellect and tutored imagination. He was perfect in the humanities of his day, keen student of Persian poetry—the Latin of Indian education,—a master of style, supremely eloquent in an age of rhetoric, a philosopher, trained in logic and Greek metaphysics, with whom scholars feared to argue, a mathematician and a lover of science. The contemporary writers extol his skill in composition and his exquisite calligraphy, and his beautiful coinage bears witness to his critical taste in the art of engrossing the Arabic character, which he read and understood though he could not speak the language fluently.

“In short, he was complete in all that high culture could give in that age and country, and he added to the finish of his training a natural genius for original conception, a marvellous memory, and an indomitable will. His idea of a central capital, and his plan of a nominal token currency, like most of his schemes, were good ; but he made no allowance for the native dislike of innovations ; he hurried his novel measures without patience for the slow adoption of the people, and when they grew discontented and rebelled he punished them without truth. To him what seemed good must be done at once, and when it proved impossible or unsuccessful his disappointment reached the verge of frenzy, and he wreaked his wrath indiscriminately upon the unhappy offenders who could not keep pace with his imagination. Hence with the best intention, excellent ideas, but no balance or patience, or sense of proportion, **Muhammad Tughluq was a transcendent failure.** His reign was one long series of revolts savagely repressed ; his subjects, whom he wished to benefit and on whom he lavished his treasure, grew to loathe him ; all his schemes came to nothing and when after twenty-six years he died of a fever on the banks of the Indus, he left a shattered empire and an impoverished and rebellious people.” (*Medieval India*, pp. 86-87.)

According to Sir Wolsley Haig, “The delineation of a character so complex and contradictory as that of Muhammad Tughluq is no easy task. He was one of the most extraordinary monarchs who ever

sat upon a throne. To the most lavish generosity he united revolting and indiscriminate cruelty; to scrupulous observance of the ritual and ceremonial prescribed by the Islamic law an utter disregard of that law in all public affairs; to a debasing and superstitious veneration for all whose descent or whose piety commanded respect a ferocity which when roused respected neither the blood of the Prophet nor personal sanctities. Some of his administrative and most of his military measures give evidence of abilities of the highest order, others are the act of a mad man. His protégé Ziva-ud-Din Barani, the historian, whom he admitted to a considerable degree of intimacy and whom he often despatched to consult, attributes many of the atrocities which he commanded or sanctioned to the evil influence of two wicked counsellors, stigmatized as 'miserable', 'accursed', or 'most accursed', whose delight was to shed the blood of Muslims, but Muhammad Tughluq was no weakling and was never a tool in the hands of his counsellors. If his advisers were vile and blood-thirsty men, it was he that chose them, and if he followed evil counsels he did so because they commended themselves to him. In like manner Barani attributes his disregard of the Islamic law in administrative and punitive measures to his early association with Sa'd, the heretical logician, Ubaid, the infidel poet, and Alim-ud-Din, the philosopher, but this is mere special pleading. His association with these free thinkers never diminished his faith in Islam, his careful regard in other respects for its laws, or his veneration for its traditions. It was not the fault of logicians, poets, or philosophers that he scandalised the orthodox by deliberately preferring human reason to divine revelation as a guide in mundane matters, and by openly avowing his preference. His private judgment misled him, but this was due to his temperament. His peculiar vice as a judge and administrator was his inordinate pride, which deprived him of the power of discriminating between offences. All his commandments were sacred and the slightest deviation from an impracticable regulation and the most flagrant act of defiance and rebellion were alike punished by a cruel death. The policy acted and reacted with cumulative effect on the monarch and his people. Disgusted by their sovereign's barbarity, they grew ever more refractory; exasperated by their disobedience he grew ever more ferocious. His wide dominions were seldom free from rebellion during his reign, and at his death the whole kingdom was in a ferment.

"Barani, notwithstanding his gratitude and his fears, is surprisingly frank. So overweening, he says, was the king's pride that he could not endure to hear of a corner of the earth, hardly even of a corner of heaven, which was not subject to his sway. He would be at once a Solomon and an Alexander; nor did mere kingship content him, for he aspired to the office of prophet as well. His ambition was to make all the kings of the earth his slaves, and Barani would liken his pride to that of Pharaoh and Nimrod, who claimed divinity as well as royalty, but that his scrupulous personal observance of the law and firm adherence to the faith of Islam cleared him of the suspicion of blasphemy and infidelity. He would compare him with Bayazid of Bustam and Husain, son of Mansur-ul-



Hall is "who, in the ecstasy of their devotion, believed themselves to have been absorbed into the Godhead, but that his 'barbarous cruelty' deprived him of any claim to sanctity." (*The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, pp. 136-37.)

### **Firuz Tughluq (1351-1388)**

Muhammad Tughluq was succeeded by Firuz Tughluq. The latter was born in 1309 and died in 1388. He was the son of Rajab who was the younger brother of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq. His mother was a Bhathi Rajput girl who agreed to marry Rajab to save the kingdom of her father Rai Mal, Chief of Abohar, from destruction at the hands of the Muslims. When Firuz grew up, he was trained in the art of administration and warfare but he did not distinguish in either of them. Muhammad Tughluq had great love for Firuz and consequently associated him with the administration of the country.

### **Succession**

When Muhammad Tughluq died on 20th March, 1351, there was complete confusion and disorder in the camp which was plundered by the rebels of Sind and Mongol mercenaries who had been hired by Muhammad Tughluq to fight against Taghi. The Sindhis and the Mongols would have decided the fate of all. It was at that time that Firuz was approached to ascend the throne. He hesitated but when the nobles, Shaikhs and Ulema put pressure on him, he agreed to become the Sultan. It was under these circumstances that Firuz was coronated in a camp near Thatta on 23rd March, 1351.

### **Opposition**

Firuz had to meet another difficulty. Khawaja-i-Jahan, Deputy of the late Sultan, proclaimed at Delhi a boy as the son and heir of Muhammad Tughluq and also put him on the throne. The situation was serious and consequently Firuz consulted the nobles and Muslim jurists. The nobles contended that Muhammad Tughluq had no son. The jurists maintained that the candidate of Khawaja-i-Jahan was disqualified on the ground that he was a minor and not fit to be seated on the throne at a time when the situation was serious. It was also contended that there was no inherited right of succession to throne under the Muslim law. Circumstances demanded that there should be a powerful ruler on the throne of Delhi. When Khawaja-i-Jahan found his position weak, he surrendered. Firuz pardoned him in consideration of his past services and allowed him to retire to Samana. However, he was beheaded on the way by a follower of Sher Khan, the Commandant of Samana.

### **Controversy**

There is some controversy with regard to the succession of Firuz Tughluq. Zia ud-Din Barani says that Muhammad Tughluq left a testament nominating Firuz as his heir-apparent. However, the authenticity of the testament has been questioned by Sir Wolseley



Haig. The latter is of the view that the child whom Khwaja-i-Jahan put on the throne was not "a supposititious son" of Muhammad Tughluq but was an issue of his blood. Consequently, the succession of Firuz was not regular and he could be called a usurper. However, this view is not shared by other historians. It is pointed out that there is nothing to show that the boy in question was the son of Muhammad Tughluq. Even if the child was the real son of Muhammad Tughluq, the succession of Firoz could not be called irregular as there was nothing like an inherited right of succession to a Muslim throne. According to Dr. R. P. Tripathi, the succession of Firuz "asserted once more with great force the right of election that had been gradually receding in the background without, however, denying the right of the son to rule. The case also emphasized fitness against merely close relationship to the sovereign." The succession of Firuz also emphasised two more principles. The first principle was that it did not matter if the new ruler was born of a mother who was a non-Muslim before her marriage. The second principle was that it was not necessary that the new ruler should be a distinguished soldier. It has rightly been stated that the succession of Firuz was "as important as it is interesting."

### **Domestic Policy**

We can discuss the reign of Firoz Tughluq under two heads : domestic policy and foreign policy. As regard domestic policy, the immediate task of the new Sultan was to win over the people to his own side. This he did by remitting all debts due to the state from the subjects and by abstaining from any endeavour to recover the treasure which had been frittered away by Khwaja-i-Jahan in his efforts to establish his nominee on the throne. For the first year of his reign Firuz was fully employed in restoring peace and order in the kingdom. The new Sultan set before himself the idea of looking after the welfare of the people and he did all that he possibly could to add to their material prosperity and comforts in life. He introduced a large number of reforms in various fields and thereby won the goodwill of the people in spite of his incompetence in the military field.

The author of Futuhat-i-Firuz Shahi observes thus : "In the reigns of former kings the blood of many Mussalmans had been shed, and many varieties of torture employed. Amputation of hands and feet, ears and noses, tearing out the eyes, pouring molten lead into the throat, crushing the bones of the hands and feet with mallets, burning the body with fire, driving iron nails into the hands, feet and bosom, cutting the sinews, sawing men asunder ; these and many similar tortures were practised. The great and merciful God made me, His servant, hope and seek for His mercy by devoting myself to prevent the unlawful killing of Mussalmans, and the infliction of any kind of torture upon them or upon any men....."

"Through the mercy which God has shown to me these severities and terrors have been exchanged for tenderness, kindness and mercy. Fear and respect have thus taken firmer hold of the hearts of men, and there has been no need of executions, scourgings, tortures, or terrors."

## Revenue Policy

When Firuz Tughluq came to the throne, there was complete chaos in revenue administration. He not only cancelled all the Taqavi loans which had been advanced in the reign of Muhammad Tughluq but also ordered that the peasants should not be harassed by the officers of the state. He increased the salaries of the officers of the revenue administration. Khawaja Hisam ud-Din was entrusted with the task of preparing a rough estimate of the public revenues of the kingdom. The Khawaja took 6 years in completing his work. He not only toured the provinces but also examined the revenue records. He ultimately fixed the revenue of the Khalsa land in the kingdom at six crores and eighty-five lakhs of Tankas. It is to be noted that the estimate was not based on the actual measurements of the land. However, it was based on local information and was a good working hypothesis.

The Sultan abolished 24 vexatious and unjust cesses which had been levied during the previous reigns. The share of the state from land revenue was lessened. He abolished the custom of imposing benevolences on the Governors at the time of their appointment and also the annual money paid by them. These amounts were actually charged by the Governors from the people. The new system of taxation was according to the Quran. Four kinds of taxes sanctioned by the Quran were imposed and those were Kharaj, Zakat, Jizya and Khams. Kharaj was the land tax which was equal to 1/10th of the produce of the land. Zakat was 2½% tax on property realised from the Muslims and spent on certain specific religious purposes only. Jizya or poll-tax was levied on the non-Muslims and other heretics. However, the scope of Jizya was extended by Firuz by charging the same from the Brahmans also who had formerly been exempted from the tax. It is stated when Jizya was levied on the Brahmans, the latter surrounded the palace and protested against the invasion of their ancient privilege. They threatened to burn themselves alive and call upon the Sultan the wrath of God. The reply of the Sultan was that they could burn themselves as soon as they pleased and the sooner the better. The result was that instead of burning themselves, they sat without food at the gate of his palace. The Sultan did not yield and ultimately it was arranged that the tax leviable from the Brahmans should be levied from the lower castes of the Hindus in addition to the tax to which they were personally liable. Khams was one-fifth of the booty captured during war. Ala-ud-Din and Muhammad Tughluq used to get four-fifths of the booty and left only one-fifth to the army. Firuz followed the Islamic law according to which the state was entitled to take only one-fifth and four-fifths had to be left to the soldiers. In consultation with the canonists, the Sultan levied an irrigation tax at the rate of 10% of the produce of the fields. The merchants were not required to pay the irregular and oppressive octroi duties which obstructed the free circulation of commodities from one part of the country to another. The collectors of revenue were warned that

they would be severely dealt with in case they charged more than the prescribed dues from the people.

The result of the reforms of Firuz was that he was able to put a lot of money into his coffers. His increased revenues were due to the improved quality of cultivation of superior crops, water tax and revenue from gardens. The gardens yielded an annual income of 1,80,000 Tankas. The revenue policy of the Sultan also added to the general prosperity of the people. Shams-i-Siraj Afif tells us that "Their (people) homes were replete with grain, property, horses and furniture : everyone had plenty of gold and silver, no woman was without her ornaments and house without good beds and **Divans**. Wealth abounded and comforts were general. The state did not suffer from financial bankruptcy during this reign. The revenues of the Doab amounted to eight lakhs of Tankas and those of the territories of Delhi to six crores and eighty-five lakhs of Tankas." Again, "By the blessings of God and favourable seasons, abundance of the necessities of life prevailed, not only in the capital, but throughout his dominions..... Grain was so cheap that in the city of Delhi wheat was 8 **Jitals** a **maund** and grain and barley 4 **Jitals**. A camp follower could give his horse a feed of 10 **Sirs** (20 lbs.) of corn for one **Jital**. Fabrics of all kinds were cheap, and silk goods, both white and coloured, were of moderate price. Orders were given for the reduction of the price of sweetmeats in accord with the general fall of prices."

Critics point out certain defects in the revenue policy of Firuz. It is pointed out that the Sultan made a mistake in extending the system of farming of taxes. Ala-ud-Din Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq stood for direct management by the state and avoided as far as possible the system of giving the right of collecting revenue to the highest bidders. The system adopted by Firuz brought less money to the government and more harassment to the people. Another defect in the system of Firuz was the introduction of the Jagir system which had been stopped by Ala-ud-Din. Shams i-Siraj Afif has described the system in these words : "The soldiers of the army received grants of land (Jagirs) enough to support them in comfort and the irregulars received payment from the government treasury. Those soldiers who did not receive their pay in this manner were, according to their necessity, supplied with assignments upon the revenues. When these assignments of the soldiers arrived in the fiefs, the holders used to get about half the total amount from the holders of the fiefs. It was the practice of certain persons in those days to buy up these assignments which was an accommodation to both parties. They used to get one-third of the value for them in the city and receive one half in the districts. The purchasers of these assignments carried on a traffic in them, and gaining a good profit, many of them got rich and made their fortune." Another defect was the extension of the scope and rigours of the collection of Jizya. The Sultan considered the Brahmans as "the citadel of infidelity" and was not prepared to exempt them.



## Irrigation

In order to encourage agriculture, the Sultan paid a lot of attention to irrigation. Shams-i-Siraj Afif tells that two canals were excavated under the orders of the Sultan. One of them was excavated from the Sutlej and the other from the Jamuna. However, Yahiya refers to four canals which were excavated in the reign of Firuz Tughluq. The first canal was from the Sutlej to the Ghaghar. It was 96 miles long. The second canal was 150 miles long and it carried the waters of the Jamuna to the city of Hissar. The third canal started from the neighbourhood of Mandvi and Sirmour Hills and connected it with Hansi. From Hansi it was taken to Arasani where the foundation of the fort of Hissar Firoza was laid. The fourth canal flowed from the Ghaghar by the fort of Sirsuti up to the village of Hirani-Khera. The remains of some of these canals can be seen even today. Skilful engineers were appointed to superintend the canals and to make their reports about the same. 150 wells were dug during his reign for irrigation purposes and also their use by travellers. It is pointed out that as a result of the irrigation facilities provided by the Sultan, as many as 52 colonies sprang up in the Doab alone. Superior crops such as wheat, sugarcane etc., were cultivated. Fruits were also grown in large quantities.

## Public Works

The master passion of Firuz was to build. Sir Wolseley Haig rightly points out that the passion for building for Firuz equalled, if it did not surpass, that of the Roman Emperor Augustus. The important towns of Firuzabad (the present Kotla Firuz Shah in Delhi), Fatehabad, Hissar, Jaunpur and Firuzpur (near Badaun) were founded by him. During his Bengal campaigns, he renamed Ikhdala as Azadpur and Pandua as Firuzabad. The Sultan built 4 mosques, 30 palaces, 200 caravan Sarais, 5 reservoirs, 4 hospitals, a hundred tombs, 10 baths, 10 monumental pillars and a hundred bridges. He constructed 150 wells for the use of travellers. He dug 5 canals for irrigation. He laid out 1,200 gardens in neighbourhood of Delhi.

The Sultan established at Delhi a hospital described variously as Dar-ul-Shifa, Bimaristan and Shifakhana. Very competent physicians were appointed to look after the patients. Its Darukhana or dispensary contained numerous medicines and preparations which were supplied free. Orders were given to the staff of the hospital to be very polite to the people. The revenues of certain villages were appropriated for the maintenance of this hospital. Four hospitals of this type were also set up in other towns.

The chief architect of the state was Malik Ghazi Shahana who was assisted in his work by Abdul Haq. It is to be noted that the plan of every building along with its estimates was required to be submitted to the Diwan-i-Wizarat before money was sanctioned for its construction. About his building activities, the Sultan himself observes thus : "Among the gifts which God bestowed upon



me, His humble servant, was a desire to erect public buildings. So I built many mosques and colleges and monasteries that the learned and the devout and the holy, might worship God in these edifices and aid the kind builder with their prayers."

According to Dr. V. A. Smith, "Asiatic kings, as a rule, show no interest in buildings erected by their predecessors which usually are allowed to decay uncared for. Firuz Shah was peculiar in devoting much attention to the repair and re-building of the structures of former kings and ancient nobles.....giving the restoration of those buildings the priority over his own constructions." The two pillars of Ashoka were brought to Delhi from Meerut and Topra (in the Ambala district). The pillar from Topra was re-erected at Delhi near the palace and great mosque at Firuzabad. The pillar from Meerut was set up on a mound near the Qushk-i-Shikar or hunting palace near the Bara Hindu Rao Hospital at Delhi. Shams-i-Siraj Afif describes the process of transportation in these words: "A number of large boats had been collected, some of which could carry 5,000 and 7,000 **mans** of grain and the least of them 2,000 **mans**. The column was very ingeniously transferred to these boats, and was then conducted to Firuzabad where it was landed and conveyed into Kushk with infinite labour and skill."

### Judicial Reforms

When Firuz came to the throne, the penal law of the country was a savage one. To quote the Sultan himself, "In the reigns of the former kings, many varieties of tortures were employed. Amputation of hands and feet, ears and noses; tearing out the eyes, pouring molten lead into the throat, crushing the bones of the hands and feet with mallets, burning the body with fire, driving iron nails into the hands, feet and bosom, cutting the sinews, sawing men asunder: these and many similar tortures were practised. The great and merciful God made me, His Servant, hope and seek for His mercy by devoting myself to prevent the unlawful killing of Mussalmans and the inflicting of any kind of torture upon them or upon any man." The result of the reforms of Firuz was that the judicial system became more humane than before. Not only the practice of torture was abolished as a means of ascertaining truth, very mild punishments were imposed on criminals. In some cases, culprits got no punishment at all. The penal reforms applied not only to the Muslims but to all sections of the population. Dr. V. A. Smith praises Firuz Tughluq in these words: "One reform, the abolition of mutilation and torture, deserves unqualified commendation and the orders must have been acted on to a considerable extent during his life-time."

Another reform introduced by Firuz was that if a traveller died on the road, the feudal chiefs and Muqaddams were required to call the Qazis and other Muslims and get the body of the deceased examined. A report was required to be drawn certifying under the seal of the Qazi that no wound was to be found on the body. It was only then that the deceased was to be buried.

A new department of Diwan-i-Khairat was set up to make provision for the marriages of poor girls. Any one who had a daughter of marriageable age and lacked the required money for her wedding, could apply to the Diwan-i-Khairat. The offices of this department made enquiries about the financial position of the applicant and fixed the amount of money that was to be paid to him. Poor men and widows came to the capital from all parts of the country to get the names of their daughters registered in the Diwan-i-Khairat.

The Sultan also set up another Department known as Diwan-i Istihqaq. This department gave financial help to the deserving people. 36 lakhs of Tankas were annually set apart for this purpose. The view of Afif is that about 4 200 men received help from this department. To provide relief to those who had been the victims of recklessness and fitfulness of Muhammad Tughluq, the Sultan made liberal grants.

The Sultan also set up an employment bureau. This was concerned chiefly with those who desired clerical and administrative employment. It was the duty of the Kotwal of Delhi to seek those who were without employment and to produce them in the court. The Sultan personally made inquiries into their circumstances and qualifications. After consulting their inclination, they were provided with employment. No effort was made to find out whether there was any demand for their services or not as the whole thing was done on a charitable basis. It must have helped many a young idler.

### Learning

The Sultan was interested in the promotion of learning. He patronised the Shaikhs and learned men and gave them a hearty reception in his Palace of Grapes. He gave pensions and gratuities to the learned. The Sultan was fond of history. Zia-ud-Din Barani and Shams-i-Siraj Afif wrote their works under his patronage. **Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi** was also written during his reign. The autobiography of the Sultan is known as **Fatuhat-i-Firuz Shahi**. When the Sultan conquered Nagarkot, a large number of Sanskrit books fell into his hands. 300 of these books were translated into Persian by Aazz-ud-Din Khalid Khani under the title of **Dalail-i-Firuz Shahi**. A large number of colleges and monasteries were established where men devoted themselves to prayers and meditation. A mosque was attached to each college for worship. Two well-known professors were attached to these colleges. One of them was Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Rumi. He lectured on theology and Islamic jurisprudence. The other was a preacher from Samarkand.

### Patronage of Slavery

Shams-i-Siraj Afif tells us that "the Sultan was diligent in procuring slaves and he carried his case so far as to command his great fief-holders and officers to capture slaves whenever they were at war and to pick out and send the best for the service of

the court. Those chiefs who brought many slaves received the highest favour. About 12,000 slaves became artisans of various kinds. Forty thousands were in readiness to attend as guards in the Sultan's equipage or at the palace. Altogether, in the city and in the various fiefs, there were 1,80,000 slaves for whose maintenance and comfort the Sultan took special care. The institution took root in the very centre of the land and the Sultan looked upon its due regulation as one of his incumbent duties." The Sultan set up a separate treasury, a separate Jao-Shughuri, and deputy Jao-Shughuri and a separate Diwan.

We are told that as many as 1,80,000 slaves poured into the capital. They were given training in different vocations. Some of them became artisans and craftsmen; some joined the army and became warriors, some were employed in the Royal Karkhanas, a few of them mounted guard at the Royal Palace. There were some who occupied such odd jobs as ewer bearers, curtain bearers, weapon bearers, keepers of medicines and libraries and some held the charge of elephants, precious birds and hunting panthers. Some of them were appointed Amirs and Maliks.

Some of the slaves had fixed salaries ranging from 10 to 100 Tankas per head. There were others who were remunerated through assignments and grants of villages. These slaves amassed wealth for themselves and their kinsfolk. It is stated that a slave named Bashir Sultani was appointed Muqti of Rapri but he paid no state dues for several years. When the matter was reported to the Sultan, he observed thus: "What difference does it make whether it is my property or the property of Bashir?"

It is to be noted that these slaves became undistinguishable from the military aristocracy of the Turks. They carried the germs of corruption into the higher classes of society. All the Departments of the Government were affected by this vice. The slaves were neither attached to the person of the Sultan nor to his dynasty. It is well-known that these very elevated slaves cut off ruthlessly the heads of the children of the Sultan and displayed their dead bodies in public.

### Army

The army was on a feudal basis. The regular soldiers of the army received grants of land which were sufficient for their comfortable living. The irregular soldiers (Ghairwajh) were paid direct from the royal treasury. There were soldiers who were supplied with transferable assignments on the revenue. The assignments were purchased in the capital by middlemen at one-third of their value and were sold to the soldiers in the districts at one-half. Thus, certain persons gained at the expense of the soldiers. The army of the Sultan consisted of 80,000 or 90,000 cavalry which could be increased by the retainers sent by the nobles. The army could not be efficient. The Sultan passed a new regulation that if a soldier became incapable of service in the field on account of his old age, his son or son-in-law or his



slave could be sent in his place. Obviously, the recognition of the hereditary claim in military service was highly objectionable. The retainers supplied by the nobles could not be relied upon by the Sultan as they looked to their masters and not to the Sultan for their recruitment, promotion and discipline. The system of assignments mentioned above was also faulty and not conducive to efficiency. Old and inefficient soldiers were allowed to approach the Sultan and he intervened on their behalf unmindful of its effect on the efficiency of the army. The inspectors who inspected soldiers and horses were corrupt and in spite of his knowledge the Sultan would not dismiss them on account of his tender heart. We are told that the Sultan overheard a trooper complaining to a comrade the hardship of being compelled to submit his horse for inspection. The Sultan enquired of the trooper about his hardship and he was told that he could not expect his horse to be passed unless he paid the inspector at least one gold Tanka. The Sultan gave him the coin to be paid to the inspector instead of taking action against the inspector. Thus, in a way, the Sultan became a party to the general corruption that was prevailing in the administration.

### Coins

The Sultan did not issue absolutely new varieties of coins. The coins in circulation in his reign were already there in the time of Muhammad Tughluq. Shams-i-Siraj Afif attributes the introduction of Shashghani or six Jital piece to Firuz but Ibn Batuta also refers to such a coin. However, it cannot be denied that Firuz introduced two coins described as **Adha** (half Jital) and **Bikh** (quarter Jital). These coins were mixed copper and silver and were intended to facilitate the transactions of the common people but there was a lot of fraud and corruption in the working of the mint. It is stated that two informers reported that six Jital pieces were a grain short of standard purity. Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, the minister, sent for Kajar Shah, the mint-master and directed him to find out a method by which the Sultan could be satisfied about the purity of the coin. Kajar Shah arranged that the coins should be melted before the metal was tested. He also approached the goldsmiths whose duty was to conduct the experiment in the presence of the king and requested them to put secretly into crucible sufficient silver to bring the molten metal to the standard of purity. They pointed out the difficulty of doing so but promised to do the needful if silver was placed within their reach. Kajar Shah got the necessary quantity of silver concealed in one of the pieces of charcoal used for heating the crucible and goldsmiths succeeded in conveying it into the vessel without being observed. When the metal was tested, it was found to be of the standard purity. Kajar Shah was carried through the city on one of the royal elephants to proclaim his honesty and the two informers were banished.

### Court

The Sultan maintained a magnificent and luxurious court



which was particularly decorated on the occasions of Id and Shabrat. There were 35 royal establishments and each had a separate staff of officers of its own. The expenses of these establishments must have been considerable.

### Religious Policy

While Firuz has been praised for other reforms, he has been criticised for his religious policy. He was a staunch Sunni Muslim and was prepared to help all those who belonged to his faith. He gave the Ulemas a high place in society and government. It is their decisions that bound the Sultan. He did nothing without consulting them. He arranged for the marriages of the daughters of poor Muslims. He set up schools and colleges and maintained them at the state expense. However, he was intolerant towards the Hindus and even the Muslim dissenters. He pulled down Hindu temples and "killed the leaders of infidelity who seduced others into error." He built mosques in place of the temples. While referring to the Hindus who had assembled for worship in the new temple at Kohana, the Sultan wrote thus: "The people were seized and brought before me. I ordered that the perverse conduct of the leaders of this wickedness should be publicly proclaimed and that they should be put to death before the gate of the palace. I also ordered that the infidel books, the idols and the vessels used in their worship which had been taken with them, should all be publicly burnt. The others were restricted by threats and punishments, as warning to all men that no Zimmi could follow such wicked practices in a Mussalman country."

Two Sayyids were put to death in Katehar. When Firuz heard of it, he personally went to Katehar and ordered a general massacre of the people. Thousands of innocent persons were put to death and 23,000 persons were made prisoners and converted into slaves. During the next five years, the Sultan visited Katehar every year and repeated the story. The cruelty was so great that the spirits of the murdered Sayyids themselves arose to intercede. That shows the ferocity of the Sultan to punish those who had the audacity of laying their hands on a Sayyid.

During the expedition against Jajnagar, the Sultan caused the idol at Jagannath to be uprooted and treated with every mark of indignity. The new idol temples built in villages of Maluha, Tughluqpur and Salibpur near Delhi and in the town of Gohana in the Punjab were demolished.

It was reported to the Sultan that a certain Brahman was inviting Muslims to worship idols. The Sultan referred his case to the Ulema, Mashaikh and Muftis. All of them demanded the conversion of the Brahman to Islam. In case he refused to do so, he was to be burnt alive. The Brahman was given the option but as he stuck to his principles, he was burnt to death.

The Sultan imposed Jizya on the Brahmins who had never been taxed before. He called a meeting of the Ulema and Mashaikh and addressed them in these words: "The Brahmins are the very keys of

the chamber of idolatry and infidels are dependent on them. They ought therefore, to be taxed first. The Ulama and Mashaykh also agreed that they should be taxed."

The Brahmans naturally protested against the action of the Sultan and threatened to die and burn themselves alive before his palace. It is stated that the Sultan was so much impressed by the sincerity of the Brahmans that he reduced the amount of Jizya to be realised by them.

The Sultan offered all kinds of temptations to induce people to embrace Islam. To quote the Sultan, "I encouraged my infidel subjects to embrace the religion of the Prophet and I proclaimed that every one who repeated the creed and became a Mussalman should be exempt from the Jizya, a poll tax. Information of this came to the ears of the people at large and great numbers of Hindus presented themselves and were admitted to the honour of Islam." The Hindus who became Muslims were not required to pay Jizya. They were also offered temptations of Jagirs, rewards in cash, titles, honour and state employment in case they became Muslims.

The Sultan was intolerant towards the Shias and other non-Sunni Mussalmans who were considered to be heretics by the orthodox Sunnis. About the Shias, the Sultan observes thus: "I seized them all and I convinced them of their errors. On the most zealous I inflicted capital punishment and the rest I visited with censure and threats of public punishment. Their books I burnt in public and, by the grace of God, the influence of this sect (Shias) was entirely suppressed." The Mulhid and the Abahtiyar were imprisoned and banished and their religious practices were stopped. The Mehdwis were punished and their leader Rukn-ud-Din was convicted of hearsay and he was killed with some of his supporters and disciples. The Sultan tells us that the people tore Rukn-ud-Din to pieces and broke his bones into fragments. A similar treatment was given to the Sufis.

It is pointed out that "Firuz's iconoclasm is somewhat incongruous, in view of his tremendous interest in the historical and cultural past of India. A visit to a library in Kangra led him to order the translation from Sanskrit into Persian and Arabic of various manuscripts on the subject of Hinduism. He saw the pillars of Asoka at Meerut and Topra, and was so fascinated by them that he had them transported to Delhi, difficult as this was, and one of them was placed in a commanding position on the roof of his citadel. He was curious to know what the inscription said, but no one could read it, the script have changed since the time of Asoka. He was told that it was a magical charm and that it was associated with religious ritual. If objects of infidel worship had indeed been so abhorrent to Firuz, he would have had the pillars destroyed: instead, they were placed in positions of prominence."

The Sultan had great regard for the Khalifa of Egypt. He styled himself as the deputy of the Khalifa. During the first six years of his reign, the Sultan received twice a patent of rulership

and robes of honour from the Khalifa. He associated the name of the Khalifa on his coins along with his own name. The name of the Khalifa was read in the **Khutba**, along with that of the Sultan.

A reference may be made to some minor aspects of the domestic policy of the Sultan. The Sultan wanted to make atonement for the sins of Muhammad Tughluq. He ordered the heirs of those who had been executed during the reign of Muhammad Tughluq and those who had been deprived of a limb, nose, eye, hand or foot to be satisfied with gifts and reconciled to the late king. They were required to give declarations in writing duly attested by certificates. Those written pardons were put in a chest placed near the tomb of Muhammad Tughluq so that it might help him on the Day of Judgment. All those who had been deprived of their villages, lands and ancient patrimonies during former reigns, were restored to their rights. Their claims were fully examined in courts of law and when those were proved, their property was restored to them.

A plot was formed in 1358 against the life of Firuz. His cousin, Khudavandzada and her husband arranged that the king should be assassinated by armed men on the occasion of the visit of the Sultan to their house. However, the plot was frustrated by her son Davar Malik who was not in sympathy with the stepfather. He indicated to the Sultan by signs that his wife was in danger and thus caused him to leave before arrangements for his assassination were complete. On returning to his palace, the Sultan ordered troops to surround the house and the men who would have murdered the Sultan were arrested. Instead of hanging Khudavandzada, she was merely imprisoned and her wealth was confiscated. Her husband was also banished.

### Foreign Policy

Firuz Tughluq was a pious and merciful ruler. He did not possess the courage which was required of a king of the 14th century. He did not possess the qualities which could help him to bring under his control all those parts of the Delhi empire which had become independent during the reign of Muhammad Tughluq. The Sultan had a horror of wars and his heart would begin to sink at the sight of bloodshed. According to Thomas, "His generalship in two campaigns to Bengal and his eventual reduction of the Thatta, seems to have been of the lowest order; and the way he allowed himself to be deluded into the deserts of Cutch or the defiles of Jaj Nagar, seems to savour of positive fatuity." No attempt was made by the Sultan to bring the Deccan under his control. When his officers asked him to send an expedition to Daultabad, the Sultan "looked distressed and his eyes were suffused with tears and approving their arguments, he said that he was resolved never more to make war upon men of the Muhammadan faith." There was no Mongol invasion during his reign. Yahya tells us that the 'frontiers of the kingdom were secured by placing them under great armies and the well-wishers of the Emperor."

## Bengal

Haji Iliyas was the independent ruler of Bengal. He took up the title of Shams-ud-Din Iliyas Shah. He made himself master of Eastern and Western Bengal. He also attacked Tirhut with a view to annexation. In spite of his disinclination for war, Firuz Tughluq felt that action must be taken against Shams-ud-Din. In November 1353, the Sultan marched from Delhi at the head of 70,000 horses. When Iliyas heard of the advance of the Sultan, he retreated into the fort of Ikhdala which was situated at a distance of 10 or 12 miles from Pandua. While pursuing the retreating enemy, the Sultan issued a proclamation to the people of Bengal which has been described by Dr. Ishwari Prasad as "one of the most extraordinary documents in the history of the Sultanate of Delhi and throws much light upon the mild policy of Firuz." After promising concessions to the people, the proclamation reads thus: "Whereas it has come to our auspicious ear that Iliyas Haji has been committing oppression and high handedness upon the people of the territory of Lakhnauti and Tirhut, shedding unnecessary blood, even shedding the blood of women, although it is a well established position in every creed and doctrine that no woman, even if she be a **Kafir**, should be slain. And whereas the said Iliyas Haji has been levying illegal cesses not sanctioned by the law of Islam, and thus putting the people into trouble; there being no security of life and property, no safety for honour and chastity ..... And whereas he has exceeded the limit and publicly rebelled against our authority, therefore we have approached invincible army for the purpose of opening this territory, and for the happiness of the people there-of; desiring thereby to deliver all from this tyranny, to convert the wounds of his oppressions by the slaves of justice and mercy, and that the tree of their existence, withered by the hot pestilential winds of tyranny and oppression, might flourish and fructify by the limpid water of our bounty." Haji Iliyas was defeated by the Delhi troops but the Sultan did not take full advantage of his hard-earned victory and went back to Delhi in September 1354 without annexing Bengal. There are two views regarding the action of the Sultan. One view is that the Sultan decided to retire on account of the cries of the women in the besieged fort. To quote Shams-i-Siraj Afif, "To storm the fort, put more Musalmans to the swords and expose honourable women to ignominy, would be a crime for which he could not answer on the Day of Judgement and which would leave no difference between him and the Mughals." Another view is that the Sultan retreated because he was afraid of the disasters that might come on account of the beginning of the rainy season. Whatever the cause of the retreat, one has to agree with the statement of Thomas that "the invasion only resulted in the confession of weakness."

Firuz made another attempt to conquer Bengal after a few years. Zafar Khan, son-in-law of Fakhr-ud-Din Mubarak Shah of Eastern Bengal, ran away from Sunargaon to Delhi and complained to Firuz Tughluq of the high-handedness of the Bengal ruler. The death of Haji Iliyas also encouraged Firuz to organise an expedition against Bengal. Firuz Tughluq set aside all previous treaties and



assurance of friendship and marched in 1359 against Sikander Shah, the son and successor of Haji Ilyas. The army of the Sultan consisted of 70,000 horses, about 500 elephants and a considerable infantry. On the way, the Sultan halted for 6 months at Jafarabad on the river Gomti and founded in its neighbourhood the city of Jaunpur in the memory of Muhammad Tughluq who was also known as Prince Juna Khan. When the rainy season was over, the Sultan continued his advance towards Bengal. Like his father, Sikandar Shah retreated into the fortress of Ikhdala which was besieged by the Delhi troops. The fort was defended bravely and when the rains came and the territory was flooded, the Sultan came to terms with Sikandar Shah which were favourable to the Bengal ruler. The result was that the second Bengal expedition failed in its objective. It merely proved the weakness of the Sultan.

### **Jajnagar**

While coming back to Delhi from Bengal, the Sultan decided to conquer Jajnagar (modern Orissa). It is difficult to state the real motive of the Sultan in waging war against Jajnagar. The view of Sir Wolseley Haig is that the Sultan wanted to capture Puri which was famous for the temple of Jagannath. The ruler of Jajnagar ran away on the approach of Sultan and took shelter in Talingana. The Sultan destroyed the Hindu temples. Their idols were thrown into the sea and some of them were sent to Delhi to be trodden under foot by the faithful. After that, the ruler of Jajnagar was called back and his territories were restored to him on the condition that he would send every year a number of elephants to the Sultan.

From Jajnagar, the Sultan went to Chhota Nagpur. On the route to Nagpur, the Sultan lost his way and for several months nothing was known about his whereabouts. A large number of soldiers died in those jungles.

### **Nagarkot**

It is true that the fort of Nagarkot had been conquered in 1337 by Muhammad Tughluq but it had become independent once again towards the end of his reign. Firuz Tughluq decided to conquer it once again. The fort was besieged for 6 months and ultimately its ruler submitted. The Sultan entered the Jawalamukhi temple. Its idols were broken and their pieces were mixed with flesh and blood of the cow. Some of the idols were sent as trophies to Medina. It is to be noted that from the temple of Jawalamukhi, a large number of Sanskrit books fell into the hands of the Sultan and some of them were translated into Persian under the title of **Dalail-Firuz Shahi**.

### **Sind**

Muhammad Tughluq had died while fighting in Sind and Firuz Tughluq himself was coronated in a camp in Sind. It was considered necessary to reconquer Sind. In 1361-62 A.D., Firuz Tughluq marched towards Thatta, capital of the Jams of Sind, with 90,000 cavalry, 480 elephants, 5,000 boats and numerous infantry. Jam Babaniya, the ruler of Sind, decided to oppose the Sultan with an army of

20,000 cavalry and 4,000,000 infantry. The Delhi army suffered on account of the outbreak of famine and an epizootic disease. About three-fourths of the Delhi army was destroyed in this manner. It is under these circumstances that the Sultan decided to retreat to Gujarat. Unfortunately, while retreating to Gujarat, he lost his way on account of the treachery of the guides. He drifted into the Rann of Cutch. For about 6 months, nothing was known about the whereabouts of the Sultan and his army. However, Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, his able minister, sent fresh troops to the Sultan and it was with the help of those troops that the Sultan attacked the Sindhis in 1363 and forced them to come to terms. The Sindhis agreed to pay an annual tribute of several lakhs of Tankas to the Sultan and also acknowledged the overlordship of the Sultan. Jam Babaniya was taken away to Delhi and his brother was appointed in his place. The conquered Jam appears to have remained loyal to the Sultan all his life. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, the Sind expedition is "a singular instance of the Sultan's fatuity and lack of strategical skill".

### **Death of Firuz**

The last days of the Sultan were not peaceful. As he advanced in age, his judgment began to fail. He received a severe shock when his eldest son Fateh Khan died in 1374. He made a mistake in sharing the work of administration with his son Muhammad Khan. Instead of doing work, the Prince devoted all his time to pleasure. Attempts were made to create more interest for work in the Prince but failed. Being disappointed, the nobles organised a rebellion against the authority of Muhammad Khan and the latter was obliged to fight. He was on the verge of victory when the nobles brought the Sultan into the field. The result was that Muhammad Khan was defeated and he fled for his life towards the Sirmur hills. Firuz then appointed his grandson, Ghias-ud-Din Tughluq Shah, son of Fateh Khan, as his heir and also conferred upon him the royal title. Firuz Tughluq died on 20th September, 1388, at the age of 80. According to Moreland, "The death of Firuz marked the end of an epoch. In the course of a few years the kingdom broke up, and during the first half of the fifteenth century there was no longer a single predominant Muslim power in India."

### **Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul**

Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul was originally a Hindu of Telingana. His Hindu name was Kuttu or Kunnu. He became a Muslim in the time of Muhammad Tughluq. He was given the fief of Multan and he managed it very efficiently. When Firuz ascended the throne, he called Maqbul to his court and made him his Prime Minister after the fall of Ahmad-bin-Avaz. The Sultan conferred upon him the title of Khan-i-Jahan, "Lord of the World". The Sultan came to have so much of confidence in him that whenever he went out of Delhi, the affairs of the state were left into the hands of Maqbul. He saved his master from disaster in Sind by sending him timely help. According to Lane-Poole, "As the Sultan's Deputy and **alter ego** he

held the state securely while his master was away, stood always between him and his official worries, and administered the kingdom with exceptional skill and wisdom. If the borders were more limited than before, the smaller area was better developed and made more productive. It was doubtless due to Maqbul's influence, seconded by the Rajput blood which Firuz inherited from Bibi Naila, that the new regime was marked by the utmost gentleness and consideration for the peasantry."

Although Maqbul was a great statesman, he was a slave to pleasures. He had in his harem 2,000 ladies who ranged from olive Greeks to saffron Chinese. The Sultan was so much fond of Maqbul that he allowed an income of over a thousand a year to every son that was born to him and yet more by way of marriage portion to each daughter. The amount must have been very great taking into consideration the number of women in his harem. Maqbul had another weakness. He gave high and lucrative posts to his relatives and children. He lived to a ripe old age and when he died in 1370, his son Juna Shah was appointed in place of his father and was also given the title of Khan-i-Jahan. Unfortunately, he was not loyal like his father. He tried to estrange the relations between the Sultan and his son Prince Muhammad Khan. When the Sultan came to know of it, he was dismissed.

### **Character and Estimate of Firuz**

Contemporary Indian writers are unanimous in praising Firuz Tughluq. Their view is that since the time of Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud, no king had been "so just and kind, so courteous and God-fearing, or such a builder" as Firuz was. The latter was adored by the people. He reformed abuses. He checked extortion. He increased irrigation. He was a father to his people. He took care of the needy and unemployed. He refused to dismiss aged officials and allowed their sons to act for them. He helped the marriages of the poor Muslims. He provided state hospitals for all classes. He was a devout Muslim. He kept fasts and said public prayer. When an old man, he went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Salar Masud at Bahraich and humbly got himself shaved as an act of piety. He never did anything without consulting the Koran. He even selected a Governor in accordance with a lucky omen in the sacred book. He was always worried about the welfare of his subjects. The people enjoyed prosperity during his reign.

However, there are certain aspects of his life which take away from his greatness. He was not a general and consequently he did not make any effort to reconquer the territories which had been lost in the Deccan during the reign of his predecessor. He was not strict in administration. Many examples of his misplaced generosity can be quoted. It has already been pointed out how he gave a Tanka to a trooper so that the latter could bribe his inspector. The Sultan made a mistake in organising his army on a feudal basis. He should not have revived the Jagir system which had been abolished by Ala-ud-Din Khalji. The granting of big Jagirs was bound to create trouble and ultimately was partly responsible for the disintegration of the



Tughluq Empire. The Sultan also made a mistake in creating a large number of slaves. These slaves interfered with the administration of the country and were partly responsible for the fall of the Tughluq Empire. The religious policy of the Sultan was also partly responsible for the downfall of the Tughluq dynasty. The Hindus and non-Sunni Muslims became the enemies of the Tughluq dynasty. The Sultan made a mistake in making the Ulemas the masters of the show. According to Dr. R. P. Tripathi, "The irony of history reflects itself in the unfortunate fact that the very qualities that had contributed to the popularity of Firuz were also largely responsible for the weakness of the Sultan of Delhi.

According to S. R. Sharma, "Firuz was neither an Ashoka nor an Akbar, both of whom have been noted for their religious toleration. Firuz was a fanatic like Aurangzeb, though unlike him a wine-bibber. But in spite of this, he had more of constructive wisdom in him than his dilettante predecessor possessed. Lack of martial vigour and the unwisdom of feudalising the kingdom are the only other charges that have been levelled against him." (*The Crescent in India*, p. 154.)

An attempt has been made to compare Firuz with Jalal-ud-Din Khalji. However, it is pointed out that it is better to compare Firuz with Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad than with any other ruler. Like Nasir-ud-Din, he was too much inclined towards religion and like him again he found his Balban in Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul. Both sovereigns were of a mild and forbearing disposition although Firuz was a more capable administrator. According to Sir Wolsley Haig, "Both were weak rulers, but Firuz was far less weak and vacillating than Mahmud and both were benevolent, but the benevolence of Firuz was more active than that of Mahmud. Firuz possessed far more ability than Mahmud, and his weakness consisted largely in an indolent man's distaste for the details of business and in unwillingness to cause pain. His benevolence was indiscriminate, for he showed as much indulgence to the corrupt official as to the indigent husbandman and his passion for constructing works of public utility was due probably as much to vanity as to benevolence." (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, pp. 184-5.)

Henry Elliot has tried to compare Firuz with Akbar. However, Dr. Ishwari Prasad points out that the comparison is unnecessary and unjust. According to him, "Firuz had not even a hundredth part of genius of that great-hearted and broad-minded monarch who preached from the high platform of public interest the gospel of peace, goodwill and toleration towards all sects and creeds. The reforms of Firuz lacked permanence, they failed to strengthen the Muslim polity and to gain the confidence of the Hindus whose feelings were embittered by his religious intolerance. Altogether they produced a reaction which proved fatal to the interests of the dynasty of which he was by no means an unworthy representative." (*Medieval India*, pp. 314-15.)

Dr. R. C. Majumdar says : "Although the reign of Firuz was marked by mildness and beneficent activities, in striking contrast to



that of his predecessor, it also undermined, to a large extent, the foundation of the Sultanate. The active interest and influence of the 'Ulema' and Mushaikhs in affairs of State which Firuz permitted, partly as policy and partly as an article of faith, was a retrograde step. His connivance at the inefficiency of public servants, misplaced leniency in dealing with civil and military officials, and undue favours shown to the nobility weakened the entire administrative machinery. His aversion to war against the Muslims, even when it was imperative, —in striking contrast to the brutal severity with which he treated the Hindus of Katehar—, and particularly his unwillingness (on the specious ground of saving Muslim women from disgrace) or inability to carry the fights to a finish, destroyed the stability of the empire. The organisation of the slaves, though promoted by humane consideration, was no doubt partly due also to a desire to create a personal bodyguard on which the Sultan could trust for his own safety. But as could be easily foreseen, it developed into something like a Praetorian Guard and proved to be a great disturbing factor in the State. On the whole, in spite of peace, prosperity, and contentment that prevailed during the long reign of Firuz Shah, no one can possibly doubt that his policy and administrative measures contributed to a large extent to the downfall of the Delhi Sultanate, and accelerated the process of the decline that had already set in during his predecessor's reign." (*The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 107.)

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "The reign of Firuz closes the most brilliant epoch of Muslim rule in India before the reign of Akbar." In spite of his defects of character, Firuz "succeeded in improving the administration and in alleviating the lot and winning the affection of his subjects. Military capacity and diligence in matters of detail are qualities indispensable to an oriental despot, and Firuz lacked both. After two unsuccessful expeditions into Bengal he was fair to recognise the independence of that country, and his rashness twice imperilled the existence of his army. His easy tolerance of abuses would have completely destroyed the efficiency of that mainstay of absolute power, had it not been counteracted by the vigilance and energy of his officers, who were carefully selected and entirely trusted by him. His judgment of character was, indeed, the principal counterpoise to his impatience of the disagreeable details of government, and the personal popularity which he enjoyed as the kindly and genial successor of a capricious tyrant secured fidelity of his trusted officers, but his extensive delegation of authority to them undermined the power of the crown. No policy, however well-devised could have sustained this power under the feeble rule of his successors and the terrible blow dealt at the kingdom within ten years of his death, but his system of decentralisation would have embarrassed the ablest successors, and undoubtedly accelerated the downfall of his dynasty." (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 189.)

### **The Later Tughluqs**

Firuz Tughluq was succeeded by his grandson who took up the

title of **Ghiyas-ud Din Tughluq Shah II**. His uncle Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad opposed his succession to the throne but he was defeated and he ran away to Kangra. The new king gave himself up to a life of pleasure and tried to strengthen his position by merely disposing of all possible rivals. He imprisoned his brother, Salar Shah. Abu Bakr, his cousin, became a conspirator in order to save his own skin. Rukn-ud-Din also supported him. The result was that Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq Shah II ran away from his palace by a door opening towards the Jamuna. However, he was overtaken and killed by a body of household troops led by Rukn-ud-Din.

It was under these circumstances that Abu Bakr Shah became king on 19th February, 1389. He appointed Rukn-ud-Din as his minister but later on put him to death as he was found to be a party to a conspiracy to usurp the throne. There was a contest for power between Abu Bakr Shah and Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad. The latter marched from Kangra to Samana where he was proclaimed king on 24th April, 1389. He continued his march towards Delhi. Ultimately, Abu Bakr Shah was able to inflict on Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad a crushing defeat and the latter crossed the Jamuna into Doab and retired to Jalesar which was made by him his headquarters. Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad took the field once again in July 1389 and marched on Delhi. However, he was defeated once again and was forced to retire to Jalesar. In spite of his defeat for the second time, the authority of Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad was acknowledged in Multan, Lahore, Samana, Hissar, Hansi and other districts to the north of Delhi. In April 1390, Abu Bakr Shah left Delhi to deal with Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad but when he reached near Jalesar, the latter eluded him and reached Delhi by forced marches at the head of 4,000 horse and occupied the palace. Abu Bakr at once retraced his steps and as he entered Delhi, Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad fled and went back to Jalesar. A conspiracy was hatched against Abu Bakr and when he came to know of it, he retired with his followers to Mewat and it was under these circumstances that Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad entered the capital and was enthroned in the palace of Firuzabad on 31st August, 1390.

**Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad** ruled for about 4 years from 1390 to 1394. His first task was to crush Abu Bakr and his followers. Abu Bakr was made to surrender and he was sent as a prisoner to Meerut where he died soon afterwards. In 1392, the Hindus of Etawah, led by Narsing, Sarvadhanan and Bir Bhan, rose in revolt. Islam Khan was sent against them. He defeated them and he carried Narsing to Delhi. As soon as his back was turned, there was a fresh rebellion but the same was crushed once again. There was another rebellion in 1393. On that occasion, the Governor of Jalesar enticed their leaders, by fair words, into Kanauj. There he treacherously slew them all except Sarvadhanan who escaped and took refuge in Etawah. In the same year, the king marched through the rebellious district of Mewat and laid it waste. On 20th January, 1394, Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad died.

His son ascended the throne at Delhi on 22nd January, 1394

under the title of **Ala-ud-Din Sikandar Shah**. His reign was brief. He fell sick almost immediately after his accession and died on 8th March, 1394.

The vacant throne now fell to the lot of Prince Mahmud, the youngest son of Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad. He took up the title of **Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud Tughluq**. The new king had to face many difficult problems. There were strong factions at the capital which made it practically impossible to establish a strong government. The Hindu chiefs and Muslim Governors openly disregarded the authority of the central government. The whole country from Kanauj to Bihar and Bengal was in a state of turmoil. The great nobles used or abused the royal authority as suited their convenience and interest. Khwaja Jahan who had been created Sultan-ush-Sharq or King of the East became independent at Jaunpur and set up a new dynasty.

Some of the nobles put forward Nusrat Khan, a grandson of Firuz Tughluq, as a rival claimant to the throne. His cause was also taken up by the Amirs and Malikis at Firuzabad and the slaves of the old regime. Thus there were two Sultans arrayed in hostile camps and the crown was tossed to and fro like a shuttlecock between the contending factions. Many party leaders came into prominence but among them Bahadur Nahir, Mallu Iqbal and Muqarrab Khan were the most important. The various cities which had at different times been the capital of the kingdom were now held by the factions of one puppet or the other. Muqarrab Khan and Mahmud Shah were in Delhi. Nusrat Shah and the other nobles and servants of Firuz Tughluq were in Firuzabad. Bahadur Nahir, whose allegiance had been temporarily secured by Muqarrab Khan, was in Old Delhi. Mallu who owed his life to Muqarrab Khan and received from him the title of Iqbal Khan, was in Siri. For three years, an indecisive but destructive strife was carried on in the name of Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud and Nusrat Shah. The kingdom of Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud was bounded by the walls of Delhi and Dursat Shah claimed the nominal allegiance of the districts of Doab, Sambhal, Panipat, Jhajjar and Rohtak. The provincial governors took no part in these civil wars. They watched the changes in the fortunes of the rival parties. Towards the end of the year 1397, the news came that the army of Timur had crossed the Indus and laid siege to Uchha. The advent of a foreign army had its own effect on the factions in the capital. Mallu Iqbal went over to the side of Nusrat Khan and the new allies promised to be faithful to each other. However, Mallu Iqbal treacherously attacked Nusrat Khan but the latter managed to escape to Panipat. Mallu Iqbal then decided to drive out Muqarrab Khan from the capital and fierce fighting continued between them for two months. Although peace was made between them through the intervention of some noblemen, Mallu Iqbal attacked Muqarrab Khan at his residence and killed him. The result of this was that Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud Shah became a tool in the hands of Mallu Iqbal. This was the state of affairs at Delhi when in October 1398 news was received that Timur had crossed the Indus, the Chenab and the Ravi and occupied Multan which was already held by his grandson.



### Timur's Invasion of India (1398)

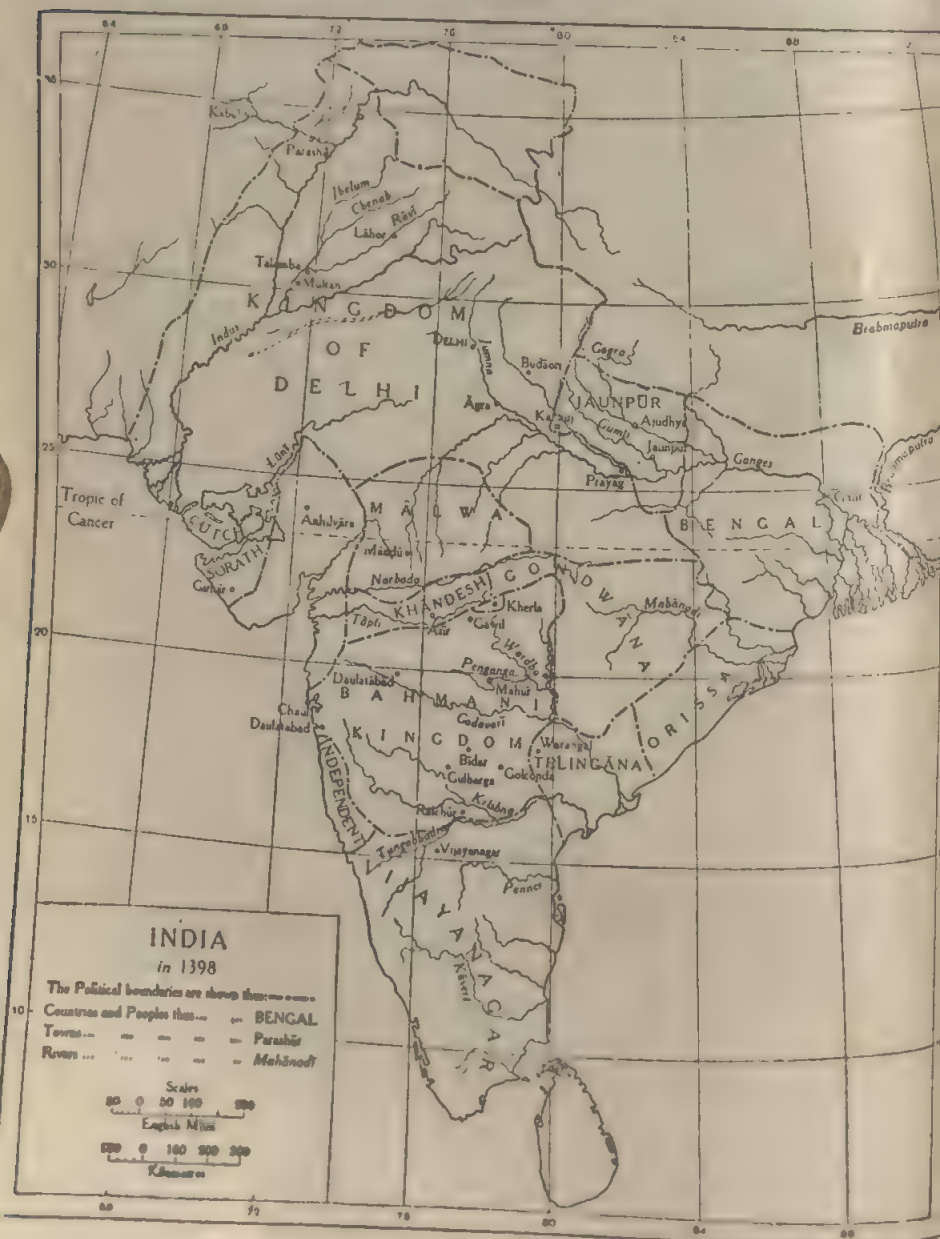
Amir Timur or Timur-i-Lang (the Lame) "Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction", was born in 1336 A.D. at Desh which was 50 miles south of Samarkand. He was the son of Amir Turghay, chief of the Gurgan branch of the Barlas, a noble Turkish tribe. He became the head of the Chaghtai Turks at the age of 33. He waged wars against Persia and the adjoining lands. He was able to establish his control over Persia and its dependencies. Before he thought of India, he had already conquered Mesopotamia and Afghanistan.

Efforts have been made to find out the **real motive underlying the invasion of India** by Timur but it appears that he had no clear-cut motive to attack this country. He was a great military adventurer and was fired with the lust for dominions. His ambition to conquer more lands must have naturally drawn his attention to India. Moreover, the gold, silver, jewels, and pearls of India must have added to the attraction. However, it is stated in the **Malfuzat-i-Timuri** and the **Safarnama** that the principal object of his expedition was neither conquest nor plunder but the destruction of the unbelievers. It is stated that Timur summoned a council of warriors and the Ulema to seek their advice. Shah Rukh referred to the vast area of India and the advantages that were sure to come on account of its conquest. Prince Muhammad pointed to the resources of India and her precious metals, jewels and pearls. He also emphasised the religious aspect of the matter. Some nobles pointed out to the evil consequences of settling down in India. Having heard all this, Timur is said to have observed thus: "My object in the invasion of Hindustan is to lead an expedition against infidels, that, according to the law of Muhammad, we may convert to the true faith the people of that country, and purify the land itself from the filth of infidelity and polytheism: and that we may overthrow their temples and idols and become **Ghazis** and **Mujahids** before God." His view was endorsed by the learned in the law. However, Dr. D.S. Lal does not accept this view. He points out that Timur did not appear to be an iconoclast. So far as the destruction of temples was concerned, Timur was lukewarm in its execution. He had in his army, Turks who worshipped idols and men who worshipped fire—the Persian Magi, sooth-sayers and "unbelievers." The idolaters carried their idols. This was due to the fact that Timur observed the precepts of Changiz Khan and preferred them to the laws of Islam. Dr. Lal also points out that the Muslims also suffered as much as the Hindus. In proportion to their population, the Muslims of India paid to the invader their share in blood and tears, as heroically as the Hindus.

The view of Dr. K.S. Lal is that after the conquest of the whole of Central Asian region up to Moscow, it was natural for any conqueror dreaming of world conquest to turn to the East. Moreover, with the capture of Baghdad, Timur had drawn too near the powers of the West. The angry Bayazid, supported by Turkoman and Syrian Arabs, forbade any movement westward. Consequently, Timur thought of moving Eastward wherefrom his grandson was already sending frantic appeals for help. In 1397, Timur had given to his grandson, a lad of 15, the Provinces of Qunduz, Baqlan,



Kabul, Ghazni and Qandhar as far as the confines of Hind. The Prince had been encouraged to proceed further into India. He had crossed the Indus and had assaulted and taken the City of Uchha in November/December 1397, but at Multan he received a check. The necessity of giving help to his grandson was the immediate and real cause of Timur's invasion of India.



Another important reason seems to have been the sorry state into which the country had been brought by the successors of Firuz Shah Tughluq. It had been reported to Timur by his secret agents that the perpetual infancy of Sultan Mahmud was despised "even in the harem of Delhi." The two brothers Sarang Khan and Mallu Khan wielded authority at Multan and Delhi respectively. The fabulous wealth of India must have also been another factor, but the probable reason was the difficulty which his grandson was facing at Multan.

Before setting out himself to invade India, Timur sent his grandson, Pir Muhammad, son of Ghiyasuddin Jahangir, to do the preliminary work. Pir Muhammad crossed the Indus and captured Uchha. After that he proceeded towards Multan which was captured after a long siege of six months. Pir Muhammad also overran the whole of Kipalpur and Pak Pattan and reached the river Sutlej and waited for his grandfather.

Timur left Samarkand in April 1398. He was delayed on his way to India by an expedition of Kafirstan by the construction of forts on his road and the business of his vast empire. He left Kabul on 15th August, 1398 and crossed the Indus on 24th September, 1398. In two days, he reached the Jhelum. The local ruler named Shihab-ud-Din Mubarak opposed Timur but he was defeated. Mubarak Shah and his whole family perished in the river Jhelum. Timur crossed the Jhelum and the Ravi and on 13th October, 1398 encamped before Tulamba. He agreed to spare the town if he was paid a certain amount but in spite of that ordered a massacre of the people. Timur had to deal with Jasrat who had established himself at Lahore. The stronghold of Jasrat on the river Sutlej was taken and he ran away. On 25th October, 1398 Timur reached the northern bank of the Sutlej. On 26th October, he was joined by Pir Muhammad. During the rest of the Indian campaign of Timur, Pir Muhammad commanded the right wing of his army.

The towns of Pak Pattan and Kipalpur had incurred the displeasure of Timur by rising against Pir Muhammad. The citizens of Pak Pattan were flogged, plundered and enslaved. 500 citizens of Kipalpur were put to death to avenge their slaughter of the garrison of Pir Muhammad in that town. Rai Dul Chand, a Bhati Rajput, was the ruler of Bhatnir. He offered a tough resistance but ultimately surrendered on 9th November, 1398.

The assessment and collection of ransom of Bhatnir provoked resistance on the part of the inhabitants and after a general massacre, the city was burnt and laid waste "so that one would have said that no living being had ever drawn breath in that neighbourhood."

On 13th November, 1398, Timur left Bhatnir and marched through Sirsa and Fatehabad, pursuing and slaughtering the inhabitants who fled before him. Aharwan was plundered and burnt. At Tohana, about 2,000 Jats were slain. On 29th November, the whole army assembled at Kaithal and marched to Panipat. On 7th December, 1398, the right wing of the army reached the north of

Delhi overlooking the Jamuna. On 9th December, the army crossed the river. On 10th December, Timur captured Loni whose Hindu inhabitants were put to death.

Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud and Mallu Iqbal collected their troops within the walls of the city. On 12th December, Mallu Iqbal attacked the rear-guard of Timur. Two divisions were sent to help the rear-guard and Mallu was defeated and driven back to Delhi. The only fruit of his enterprise was a terrible massacre. At the time of the attack by Mallu on the rear-guard there were about one lakh<sup>1</sup> of adult male Hindus who had been captured by Timur and they showed their joy at the time of the attack. That was noticed by Timur and he caused them all to be put to death. Timur feared that on the day of battle they might, "break their bonds, plunder our tents and join the enemy."

Some modern writers like Malcolm condemn Timur for his massacre. Sykes in "History of Persia" excuses Timur on the ground that "awful though it was, it was dictated by imperative military exigencies." According to Harold Lamp, "At Agincourt, the English killed French prisoners in order to get rid of them for the final phase of the battle; at Nicopolis, the English, German and French Crusaders massacred the Serbian and Turkish prisoners for the battle. The massacres ordered by Timur differed only in being on a large scale." (*Tamerlane, the Earth Shaker*, pp. 280-1.)

In spite of the warnings of astrologers and misgivings of the troops, Timur crossed the Jamuna on 15th December, 1398 and early on the morning of 17th December drew up his army for the attack. Mallu Iqbal and Mahmud Shah also led their forces out of Delhi. The Indian army consisted of 10,000 horse, 40,000 foot and 120 elephants clad in armour with their tusks armed with poisoned scimitars and bearing on their backs strong wooden structures occupied by javelin and quoit throwers, crossbowmen and throwers of combustibles. The fighting line of the invading army entrenched itself with a ditch and screens of thatch before which buffaloes were hopped and bound together to break the

1. Dr. K. S. Lal points out that the figure of the massacre has been exaggerated by foreign chroniclers. Sharaf-ud-Din says that on a very conservative estimate a hundred thousand were put to the sword. In the Tuzuk Timur has also given one lac. Mir Khond also says the same thing. However, this figure has received a challenge at the hands of Indian historians. Before giving the details of the massacres, Sharafuddin says that by the time Timur reached Delhi, "more or less" a hundred thousand persons had been captured. According to the authority, those included women and children also. According to all writers, including Yazdi himself, only men above the age of 15 were killed and women and children were spared. It is obvious that the massacre could not be a hundred thousand. Mir Khond copied Yazdi verbatim but he saw through the mistake and stated that "more than a lac Hindus had been enslaved." However, Nizamuddin says that between the Indus and the Ganga, about 50,000 people had been taken prisoners. The number of the killed must have been less than that. Yahya and Badaoni put the number of the killed at 50,000. Dr. K. S. Lal is also of the opinion that about 50,000 men were massacred in cold blood on 12th December, 1398.



ousaught of the elephants. Timur placed the right wing of his army under Pir Muhammad and Amir Yadgar Barlas, his left wing under Sultan Husain, Prince Khalil and Amir Jahan and he himself commanded the centre. The two armies confronted each other outside Delhi and the battle commenced with loud shouts and cries on both sides. The assault was begun by the generals of Timur who separated themselves from the advance guard and moved off to the right and came behind the advance guard of the enemy, and fell upon them and "scattered them as hungry lions scatter a flock of sheep and killed 600 of them in this one charge."

Pir Muhammad smashed the left wing of the enemy and compelled it to flee from the battle-field. Sultan Mahmud Shah and Mallu Iqbal attacked the central wing. They fought with great courage. "The frail insect cannot contend with the raging wind nor the feeble deer against the fierce lion, so they were compelled to take to flight." Mahmud Shah and Mallu Iqbal ran away from the battle-field and Timur hoisted his flag on the ramparts of Delhi. The Sayyids, the Qazis, the Shaikhs and the Ulemas of the City waited upon Timur and in response to their request, he granted an amnesty to the people of Delhi. However, the license of the soldiery, rigour of the search for fugitives from other towns who were not included in the amnesty and assessment of the ransom led to disturbances. The result was that bloodshed continued for many days. A large number of persons were captured and made slaves. Artisans were sent to various parts of the empire of Timur. The three towns of Siri, Old Delhi and Jahan Panah were laid waste by Timur who occupied them for 15 days.

The author of *Safarnama* describes the sack of Delhi in these words: "But on the Friday night there were about 15,000 men in the city, who were engaged from early eve till morning in plundering and burning the houses. In many places the impure infidel *gahrs* made resistance. In the morning the soldiers who were outside, being unable to control themselves, went to the city and raised a great disturbance. On that Sunday, the 17th of the month, the whole place was pillaged and several palaces in Jahan Panah and Siri were destroyed. On the 18th the like plundering went on. Every soldier obtained more than twenty persons as slaves, and some brought fifty or a hundred men, women and children as slaves out of the city. The other plunder and spoils were immense: gems and jewels of all sorts, rubies, diamonds, stuffs and fabrics of all kinds, vases and vessels of gold and silver, sums of money in *Alai tankas*, and other coins beyond all computation. Most of the women who were made prisoners wore bracelets of gold or silver on their wrists and valuable rings upon their toes. Medicines and perfumes and unguents, and the like, of these no one took any notice. On the 19th of the month Old Delhi was thought of, for many infidel Hindus had fled thither and taken refuge in the great mosque, where they prepared to defend themselves. Amir Shah Malik and Ali Sultan Tawchi, with 500 trusty men, proceeded against them, and falling upon them with the sword, despatched them to hell. High towers were



built with the heads of the Hindus, and their bodies became the food of ravenous beasts and birds. On the same day Old Delhi was plundered. Such of the inhabitants as had escaped alive were made prisoners. For several days in succession, the prisoners were brought out of the city, and every Amir of a **tuman** or **kushun** took a party of them under his command. Several thousand craftsmen and mechanics were brought out of the city and, under the command of Timur, some were divided among the princes, Amirs, and Aghas who had assisted in the conquest; and some were reserved for those who were maintaining the royal authority in other parts. Timur had formed the design of building a **Masjid-i-Jami** in Samarkand, his capital, and he now gave orders that all the stone masons should be reserved for that pious work."

According to Dr. K. S. Lal, the horrible sack of Delhi was a crime as barbarous as it was unwarranted. However, Timur pleaded innocence of all that had happened when he wrote thus: "By the Will of God and by no wish or direction of mine all the three cities of Delhi by name Siri, Jahanpanah and Old Delhi had been plundered. The Khutba of my sovereignty, which is an assurance of safety and protection, had been read in the city. It was, therefore, my earnest wish that no evil might happen to the people of the place. But it was ordained by God that the city should be ruined. He, therefore, inspired the infidel inhabitants with a spirit of resistance so that they brought on themselves that fate which was inevitable." In spite of this explanation, Dr. K. S. Lal holds that the sack of Delhi will ever remain a blot on the career of Timur. If the Imperial City was sacked after protection had been granted to it, it was breach of faith. If the soldiers got out of control, it was bad generalship. Timur took notice of the ghastly deed. If he put the blame on the citizens of Delhi to mitigate the crime of his soldiers, he was also sorry for the innocent who had suffered. To punish his own soldiers he could never think of. A conqueror like Timur could hardly feel for the sack of Delhi for long and after a couple of weeks he left Delhi to sack more places and collect more wealth before returning home.

From Delhi, Timur moved to Meerut which was bravely defended by Ilyas Afghan, his son, Maulana Ahmad Thanesari and Sati. Timur razed the fortifications to the ground, put the people to death and plundered all their property. It was ordered that all the towers and walls should be levelled to the earth and the houses of the Hindus should be set on fire. Timur marched to the Ganges and after a battle on that river in which he captured and destroyed 48 boat-loads of Hindus, he crossed the river and defeated an army of 10,000 horse and foot under Mubarak Khan. He attacked and plundered two Hindu forces in the neighbourhood of Hardwar. From there, he marched towards Kangra and on the way slaughtered every day bodies of Hindus like sheep. On 16th January, 1399, he captured Kangra. After that, he marched towards Jammu whose ruler was defeated and made prisoner. "By hopes, fears and threats, he

was brought to see the beauty of Islam. He repeated the creed and ate the flesh of the cow which is an abomination among his compatriots. This obtained him great honour and he was taken under the protection of the Emperor." Just before the defeat of Raja of Jammu, Sikandar Shah of Kashmir sent a message offering his submission. An expedition was sent to Lahore. The city was captured and held to ransom. Shaikh Khokhar was led before Timur who put him to death. On 6th March, 1399, Timur held a court for the purpose of saying farewell to the princes and officers of the army before sending them to their provinces. On that occasion, he appointed Khizr Khan to the government of Multan, Lahore and Dipalpur. Some historians contend that Timur nominated him as his Viceroy in Delhi. On 19th March, 1399, Timur crossed the Indus and two days later left Bannu and reached Samarkand after some time. He inflicted on India more misery than had ever before been inflicted by any conqueror in a single invasion.

### Effect of the Invasion

(1) After the departure of Timur, the whole of Northern India was in indescribable disorder and confusion. Delhi was in ruin and almost depopulated. It was without a master. Whatever inhabitants were left, they had to face famine and pestilence. Famine was the natural consequence of the wholesale destruction of the stores of grain and standing crops by the invading army. Pestilence had its origin in the pollution of the air and water supply of the city by the dead bodies of thousands of inhabitants. So complete was the destruction that **"the city was utterly ruined and those of the inhabitants who were left died, while for two whole months not a bird moved wings in Delhi."**

(2) The Tughluq empire was completely dissolved. Khwaja Jahan was an independent ruler at Jaunpur. Bengal had long been independent. Muzaffar Shah in Gujarat did not recognise any master. Dilawar Khan in Malwa wielded royal authority. The Punjab and Upper Sind were governed by Khizr Khan as the viceroy of Timur. Samana was in the hands of Ghalib Khan. Bayana was in the hands of Shams Khan of Auhadi. Kalpi and Mohaba formed a small principality under Muhammad Khan. Mallu Iqbal remained at Baran for the present. Nusrat Shah became for some time the Lord of Delhi but he was expelled from that place by Mallu and forced to take refuge in Mewat where he died soon afterwards. It cannot be denied that the invasion of Timur gave a death-blow to the tottering Tughluq dynasty which was replaced by the Sayyid dynasty in 1414.

(3) Timur destroyed the prosperity of India. Great buildings and works of art in Delhi, Bhatnir, Kipalpur, Meerut and Hardwar were destroyed. Loot, plunder and arson deprived India of her great wealth.

(4) The invasion of Timur widened the gulf between the Hindus and Muslims. On account of their intoleration towards the Hindus, the Muslims had failed to win over the Hindus who considered the Muslims as Mlechhas. The wholesale massacre of the Hindus and

the building of towers with their skulls by Timur added to the existing bitterness. The invasion of Timur made it all the more difficult for the Hindus and Muslims to come nearer each other.

(5) Another effect of the invasion was that Indian art found its way in Central Asia. A large number of Indian artists and craftsmen were taken away by Timur to Samarkand where they were employed to construct mosques and other buildings.

(6) Timur's invasion paved the way for Mughal conquest. Babur was a descendant of Timur and he claimed the throne of Delhi partly on account of his descent. In Timur's conquest of the Punjab and Delhi, Babur found a legal and moral justification for his conquest of India.

(7) According to Dr. K. S. Lal, in spite of what Timur or his chroniclers have written, he was not clear in his mind why he was undertaking the invasion of India. His was an aimless visitation. It was a terrible calamity. The vanquished had lost all and the victor had gained nothing.

### **Tughluq Dynasty after Timur's Invasion**

It has already been pointed out that after the departure of Timur, Nusrat Shah occupied Delhi but he was driven out by Mallu Iqbal. In 1401, Mallu Iqbal felt that the prestige of Mahmud Shah would be useful to him and consequently he persuaded him to come back to the capital. The experience of Mahmud Shah after his defeat at the hands of Timur had been bitter. He was not welcomed by Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat. He had been received well by Dilawar Khan of Malwa and given a residence at Dhar but he could not resist the temptation to come back to Delhi. Mallu Iqbal received Mahmud Shah with every demonstration of respect but later on interned him in one of the royal palaces. He himself continued to govern the kingdom as if Mahmud Shah had not returned from Malwa.

In 1402, Mallu Iqbal marched to Kannauj. He also carried Mahmud Shah with him. Mahmud Shah resented his subjection to Mallu and ran away from his camp at Kanauj by night and took refuge with Ibrahim Shah, the ruler of Jaunpur. However, he was not welcomed by Ibrahim Shah and he left him with a few followers. Mahmud Shah was able to expel Ibrahim Shah's governor from Kanauj and he made that city his residence. Mallu Iqbal went back to Delhi. Ibrahim Shah submitted to the occupation of Kanauj by Mahmud Shah and went to Jaunpur.

In the same year, Mallu tried to capture Gwalior but he failed and was forced to retire. In 1404, Mallu besieged Etawah for four months but failed to capture it. He also tried to capture Kanauj but failed. In 1405, Mallu marched against Bahram Khan who had established himself in Samana. Bahram Khan ran away but was pursued up to Rugar. A pious Shaikh was successful in composing the differences between Mallu and Bahram Khan and both of them joined hands to fight against Khizr Khan. Mallu treacherously caused Bahram Khan to be flayed alive. Khizr Khan advanced



from Dipalpur on 12th November, 1405 and he defeated and slew Mallu in the neighbourhood of Pak Pattan.

After the death of Mallu Iqbal in 1405, the affairs of Delhi were controlled by a body of nobles headed by Daulat Khan Lodi and Ikhtiyar Khan. They invited Mahmud Shah and the latter came back to Delhi in December 1405. Daulat Khan Lodi was appointed the military governor of the Doab and Ikhtiyar Khan was made the governor of Firuzabad.

In 1406, Mahmud Shah sent Daulat Khan Lodi to reduce Samana. He himself marched to Kanauj with the intention of punishing Ibrahim Shah of Jaunpur for his own treatment when he visited his camp in 1402. After some fighting between the armies of Mahmud Shah and Ibrahim Shah, a peace was made but in spite of that Ibrahim Shah besieged Kanauj and captured it. He even marched towards Delhi and was on the point of crossing the Jamuna when he learnt that the ruler of Gujarat intended to make conquests at the cost of Jaunpur. It was under these circumstances that Ibrahim Shah went back to Jaunpur. Daulat Khan Lodi who had been sent to reduce Samana, drove Bahram Khan from Samana to Sirhind and forced him to surrender. He befriended and patronised his defeated enemy and established himself at Samana. On the approach of Khizr Khan, Daulat Khan Lodi ran away to the Doab and his followers joined Khizr Khan. Besides Samana, Khizr Khan captured and annexed Sirhind, Sunam and Hissar so that beyond the walls of Delhi only the Doab, Rohtak and Sambhal remained under Mahmud Shah.

It is true that Mahmud Shah got back Hissar in 1408. In January 1409, Khizr Khan appeared before the walls of Firuzabad and besieged it. However, Khizr Khan was forced to retire as the country was not capable of supporting an army on account of famine and destruction. In 1410, Khizr Khan reduced Rohtak after a siege of 6 months and no attempt was made by Mahmud Shah to help the town. In 1411, Khizr Khan marched to Narnaul and plundered that town and three others to the south of Delhi. He also besieged Mahmud Shah in Siri but he was saved once again by famine and Khizr Khan was forced to raise the siege and retire. In February 1413, Mahmud Shah died at Kairthal after a nominal reign of 20 years during which he never wielded any authority and was more than once a fugitive from his capital. With him ended the line of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq. About Mahmud Shah, the author of *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi* observes thus: "The whole business was fallen into the greatest disorder. The Sultan gave no heed to the duties of his station and had no care for the permanency of the throne; his whole time was devoted to pleasure and debauchery."

### **Daulat Khan Lodi**

After the death of Mahmud Shah, the nobles transferred their allegiance to Daulat Khan Lodi. Daulat Khan marched into the Doab and compelled the Rajputs of Etawah and Dahabat Khan of Budaun to own him as their sovereign. However, Daulat Khan came



back to Delhi as he did not want to come into conflict with Ibrahim Shah of Jaunpur. In December 1413, Khizr Khan invaded the territory of Daulat Khan and marched into Mewat. He plundered Sambhal. In March 1414, he besieged Daulat Khan in Siri with an army of 60,000 horse. Daulat Khan held out for four months and then surrendered. Khizr Khan entered Delhi as its sovereign on 28th May 1414 and founded the Sayyid dynasty. Daulat Khan was imprisoned in Hissar.

### **Causes of the Downfall of the Tughluq Dynasty**

When Muhammad Tughluq was the ruler, his empire included the whole of the continent of India, with the exception of Kashmir, Cutch and a part of Kathiawar and Orissa. On the death of Mahmud Shah, his grand-nephew, the extent of the kingdom was defined thus by a contemporary saying: "The rule of the Lord of the World extends from Delhi to Palam" (Palam is a village at a distance of a few miles from Delhi). Even this small kingdom vanished and the Sayyids established their rule at Delhi. Many factors were responsible for the downfall of the Tughluq empire.

(1) Muhammad Tughluq himself was partly responsible for the downfall of the Tughluq Empire. His transfer of the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad brought a lot of misery to the people. His introduction of the token currency emptied the treasury. His attempt to conquer Khorasan cost him a good deal. His taxation of the Doab turned its inhabitants into the enemies of the empire. His personal character also was responsible for creating a large number of enemies of the empire. No wonder, there were many revolts in many parts of the empire. It was during his time that the Bahmani kingdom was set up in the Deccan. Likewise, it was during his reign that the Vijayanagar empire was established. All his time was spent in crushing one rebellion or the other and even when he died in 1412, he was fighting against the nobles. There is no exaggeration in saying that even before the death of Muhammad Tughluq, the process of disintegration had already started.

(2) This disintegration could have been stopped if Muhammad Tughluq had been succeeded by a strong personality, but that was not to be. He was succeeded by Firuz Tughluq who was not a warrior at all. It is true that he carried out many reforms and made himself popular with the people but the lack of martial qualities in him could not enable him to reconquer those parts of India which were once parts of the Delhi Sultanate. He did not take any action at all against the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar and the Muslim state known as Bahmani kingdom.

(3) The situation became much worse under the successors of Firuz Tughluq. Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq Shah II, Abu Bakr Shah, Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad, Ala-ud-Din Sikandar Shah and Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad who ruled from 1388 to 1413 were too weak to reconquer those parts of the empire which had become independent. As a matter of fact, even those parts of India which were under Firuz Tughluq, became independent during their reigns.

The result was that the process of disintegration, instead of being stopped, was accelerated during the reigns of the weak successors of Firuz Tughluq. Those rulers contented themselves with their personal pleasures. They spent their time in mutual fights. They sent armies to plunder and massacre the people but they did nothing to give the people a good administration which alone could win their confidence and loyalty.

(4) Firuz Tughluq made many mistakes which contributed to the downfall of the Tughluq dynasty. He revived the Jagir system. He gave large jagirs to his great nobles instead of giving them salaries. The Jagirs often amounted to viceroyalties. Large districts and even provinces were assigned to eminent persons. Kara and Dalamau were granted to Mardan Daulat with the title of "King of the East". Oudh, Sandila and Koil formed separate jagirs. Jaunpur and Zafraabad were given to another Amir. Gujarat was given to Sikandar Khan and Bihar was given to Bir Afghan. All these nobles were expected to defend their frontiers and manage their internal affairs. In course of time, these Jagirdars defied the authority of the Delhi Sultan and set up independent kingdoms at the cost of the Tughluq empire. It cannot be denied that Firuz Tughluq set in motion the centrifugal forces which ultimately led to the break up of his empire. It was during the reigns of the successors of Firuz that the province of Oudh and the country to the east of the Ganges as far as the borders of Bengal were formed into an independent kingdom of Jaunpur. The provinces of Gujarat, Malwa and Khajuraho cut off their connection with Delhi and became independent states. A Hindu principality was established in Gwalior. Muslim principalities were set up in Bayana and Kalpi. The chiefs of Mewat were practically independent and they shifted their allegiance from one authority to another according to the circumstances. The Hindus of the Doab were almost continually in revolt and the rulers of Delhi had merely to content themselves with whatever they were able to realise with the help of their armed forces.

(5) Another mistake made by Firuz Tughluq was that he created a large army of slaves which became a menace in the time of his successors. The number of slaves in the reign of Firuz Tughluq was about 1,80,000 out of whom 40,000 were enlisted for service in the palace of the Sultan. It is true that by increasing the number of slaves, Firuz Tughluq was able to add to the number of converts to Islam but these slaves interfered with the administration of the country and ultimately became an important cause of the disintegration of Tughluq empire. We do not hear of eminent slaves like Qutb-ud-Din Aibak, Iltutmish and Balban who were responsible for the greatness of the so-called Slave dynasty. The slaves of Firuz Tughluq were merely a negative force who did not bother to gain even at the cost of the empire. No wonder, the army of slaves recruited by Firuz Tughluq became a liability.

(6) Firuz Tughluq made another mistake which also contributed to the fall of the Tughluq dynasty. A majority of the army men

in his reign were paid by transferable assignments on the royal revenues. Those assignments were purchased at Delhi by a professional class at about one-third of their value. Those were sold to the soldiers in the districts at one-half. This practice led to great abuse and the discipline of the army suffered. Firuz Tughluq also ordered that when a soldier became old, his son or son-in-law or even his slave could succeed him. Service in the army was made hereditary and considerations of fitness and merit were ignored. This was bound to affect adversely the efficiency of the army. Such an army could not be trusted to fight successfully against rebels or foreign invaders. Most of the army of Firuz Tughluq consisted of quotas supplied by the nobles. This army could not be controlled by the Central Government as their recruitment, promotion and discipline were in the hands of the nobles and not in the hands of the Sultan. The weakening of the military machine, on whom alone depended the integrity of the empire, was suicidal and Firuz Tughluq must be held responsible for the same.

(7) His religious policy was also partly responsible for the fall of the Tughluq dynasty. Firuz Tughluq was a staunch Sunni Muslim. He took pleasure in persecuting the non-Sunni Muslims and the Hindus. The temples of the Hindus were destroyed and their idols were broken and insulted. Their books were burnt. The Hindus were converted to Islam by threats and temptations. Jizya was exacted from them with great strictness. Even the Brahmans were not spared. A Brahman was ordered to be put to death on the charge that he was seducing the Muslims to give up their religion. Two Sayvids were put to death in Katehar. Firuz Tughluq attacked Katehar and under his orders thousands of Hindus were killed and 23,000 of them were taken prisoners and converted into slaves. This process was repeated for 5 years. That shows the bitterness of feeling which Firuz Tughluq had for the Hindus. Similar was the treatment given by Firuz Tughluq to the non-Sunni Muslims. The Mulhid and Abahtiyar were imprisoned and banished. The Mehdrins were punished. Their leader Rukn-din was torn to pieces and Firuz Tughluq took pride in the fact that God had made him the instrument of putting down such wickedness. He was also cruel towards the Shias. Their books were burnt in public and they themselves were killed. By following such a religious policy, Firuz Tughluq might have won over the goodwill of the Ulemas, Shaikhs, Sayvids and Muslim divines but by doing so he alienated an overwhelming majority of the people to such an extent that by his actions he undermined the very foundations of his empire. Firuz Tughluq ignored altogether the fact that will and not force is the basis of the state. By his actions, he failed to win over the affection of the people.

(8) The basic principle of the Muslim state in the 14th century was force. The awe and fear in which the ruling class was held disappeared. Firuz Tughluq, if at all, was loved and not feared by his subjects. The result was that the people defied the authority of the state and became independent and the empire began to disintegrate.



(9) The theocratic character of the state adversely affected its efficiency. The influence of the Mullahs and Muftis proved disastrous in the long run. A state where the bulk of the population was that of the non-Muslims could not be governed for long by a law which followed the precepts of the Quran.

(10) After conquering India, the Muslims got everything. They got plenty of wealth, women and wine. They started living a life of ease. They lost their old grit and manliness. They behaved like a disorderly mob in the midst of a campaign. The qualities of generalship disappeared and an army consisting of such persons could not keep down the Hindus or fight against the foreign invaders.

(11) Although the Hindus had been subjected to a foreign rule for a long time, they did not give up their efforts to become free and independent. It took more than 150 years to conquer and annex Ranthombor. Although the Doab is situated very near Delhi, it was never submissive. The Hindus always continued to revolt and the control of the Delhi Sultanate was merely nominal. No wonder, as soon as the authority of the Delhi Sultanate became weak, they revolted and became independent in various parts of India.

(12) The Delhi Sultanate was merely a police state. Its only function was the maintenance of law and order and collection of revenues. When it failed to discharge those duties satisfactorily, it lost the very reason for its existence.

(13) According to Dr. Lane-Poole, inter-marriages with the Hindus was one of the causes of the fall of the Tughluq dynasty. However, this view is not accepted. It is pointed out that although Firuz Tughluq had a Hindu mother, he did not show any leniency towards the Hindus. Even the subsequent events do not support the contention of Lane-Poole. Akbar adopted the policy of matrimonial alliances with the Hindus in order to strengthen his empire and it cannot be denied that he succeeded in doing so. It is only when that policy was reversed by Aurangzeb that the downfall of the Mughal empire took place.

(14) However, it cannot be denied that the invasion of India by Timur gave a death-blow to the Tughluq dynasty. Even at the time of invasion, there were two rulers, namely, Mahmud Shah and Nasrat Khan, who claimed at the same time to be the rulers of Delhi. The manner in which the people of Delhi were massacred and plundered must have completely destroyed the very foundations of the Tughluq empire. We are told that for three months Delhi had no ruler at all. There was utter confusion and disorder in the country. The various provinces became completely independent and there was none to take any action against them. Even after his restoration, Mahmud Shah did nothing to restore law and order within the territory under his control. He devoted all his time to pleasure and debauchery. No wonder, such an empire disappeared. There was nothing left to justify its existence.



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## CHAPTER X

# The Sayyid Dynasty (1414-1451)

### Khizr Khan (1414-1421)

Khizr Khan was not only the founder of the Sayyid dynasty but also its ablest ruler. He was a Sayyid. The author of **Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi** gives two reasons in support of the Sayyid descent of Khizr Khan. One reason is that on one occasion Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari, the chief of the Sayyids, paid a visit to Malik Nasir-ul-Mulk Mardan Daulat, Governor of Multan and when food was served before the guests, Malik Mardan asked the brother of Khizr Khan to wash the hands of Jalal-ud-Din. On this, Jalal-ud-Din observed thus: "He is a Sayyid and is unfit for such a work as this." Another reason given is that Khizr Khan was generous, brave, humble, hospitable and true to his word and those were the virtues which could be possessed only by a Sayyid.

In his childhood, Khizr Khan was brought up by Malik Nasir-ul-Mulk Mardan Daulat, Governor of Multan. Firuz Tughluq conferred upon Khizr Khan the Jagir of Multan. However, when confusion prevailed after the death of Firuz Tughluq, Khizr Khan was besieged and captured by Sarang Khan, brother of Mallu Iqbal. Khizr Khan managed to escape. In 1398, he joined hands with Timur and the latter at the time of his departure gave him the Jagir of Multan with its dependencies. In 1414, Khizr Khan ousted Daulat Khan and took possession of Delhi.

### Title

When Khizr Khan got possession of Delhi, his position was very weak and no wonder he did not take up the title of king and contented himself with that of **Rayat-i-Ala**. The coins were struck and **Khutba** was read in the name of Timur and after his death in the name of his successor, Shah Rukh. Khizr Khan even sent his tribute to his lord.

### Condition in 1414

When Khizr Khan became king, various authorities at the capital scrambled for power. They changed their position with great rapidity according to the circumstances. There was a lot of trouble in the Doab. The Zamindars of Etawah, Katehar, Kanauj and Badaon did not hesitate to challenge the authority

of the Central Government and also did not care to pay their tribute and no wonder many expeditions had to be undertaken against them. Jaunpur, Gujarat and Malwa had become independent of Delhi and were fighting among themselves. The Mewatis did not care for the central authority and withheld their tribute. The Khokhars were a great menace and carried on their depredations at Multan and Lahore. The Turk-Bacchas at Sarhind formed conspiracies to establish their influence. The Muslim Governors in the various provinces fought against one another and did not care for the central authority. Military adventurers and self-seeking politicians were in plenty and added to the confusion.

### **New Appointments**

After his accession to the throne, Khizr Khan re-arranged the various important offices. The office of Wazir was given to Malik-us-Sharq Malik Tuhfa and he was given the title of Taj-ul-Mulk. He continued to be Wazir up to 1421 when he died. The fief of Saharanpur was given to Sayyid Salim. The fiefs of Multan and Fatehpur were given to Abdur Rahim. The Doab was given to Ikhtiyar Khan. Malik Sarwar was appointed Shahna of the capital and he was given the authority to act for the king in his absence. Malik Daud was made secretary of state and Malik Kalu was appointed the keeper of the elephants. Malik Khair-ud-Din was made the Ariz-i-Mamalik. The various other nobles were confirmed in their previous Jagirs and offices.

### **Expeditions**

The Hindus of the Doab and Katehar did not pay their tributes and consequently in 1414, an army was sent under Taj-ul-Mulk to reduce to obedience Har Singh, the rebellious Raja of Katehar. The Raja ran away to the forests but ultimately he was compelled to surrender and also give an undertaking to pay tribute in future. The fief-holders and Hindu chiefs of the lower Doab were forced to acknowledge Khizr Khan as their master. It is rightly pointed out that the chronicles of the Sayyid dynasty are chiefly a history of expeditions of this nature. Khizr Khan was the most powerful ruler of a house the influence and dignity of which decayed with great rapidity. Even in his reign, military force was the normal means of collecting the revenue. Recalcitrants were not treated as rebels and the only punishment given to them was the realisation of the money due from them and also a promise to make regular payments in future.

In July 1416, Taj-ul-Mulk was sent to Bayana and Gwalior, not to conquer, but merely to realize the equivalent of the tribute which should have been paid otherwise and this was done by plundering at random the unfortunate cultivators.

In 1418, Har Singh of Katehar revolted once again. He was completely defeated by Taj-ul-Mulk. He was pursued into the hills of Kumaon. While Taj-ul-Mulk failed to capture him, he plundered the people amongst whom Har Singh had taken shelter.

From Katehar, Taj-ul-Mulk marched to Etawah and besieged Raja Sarwar who had revolted once again. Taj-ul-Mulk was unable to capture the fortress but he plundered the inhabitants of the district and went back to Delhi. It is pointed out that the action of Taj-ul-Mulk resembled the raid of a brigand chief and not an expedition for the permanent establishment of law and order. The result was that the people were so much exasperated that they revolted once again.

Khizr Khan besieged Badaon for six months but failed to capture it. In June 1416, he discovered a conspiracy to which Mahabat Khan was a party. The leading conspirators, Qavam-ul-Mulk and Ikhtiyar Khan, were put to death.

In 1420 Taj-ul-Mulk was sent to Koil and Etawah. Raja Sarwar was besieged in his fortress but without success. The inhabitants of the country were plundered as usual. Sarwar bought peace by making a promise to pay the tribute regularly in future. Taj ul Mulk also plundered Chandwar and invaded Katehar and got the tribute from there.

Malik Tughan revolted and marched from Jullundur to Sarhind where, after plundering the country, he besieged the fortress. When forces were sent against him, Malik Tughan raised the siege of Sarhind and retreated. He was pursued and forced to seek refuge with Jasrat, the Khokhar.

In 1421, Khizr Khan marched into Mewat to assert his authority there. He captured and destroyed the former stronghold of Bahadur Nahir and received the submission of most of the inhabitants. The Raja of Gwalior bought peace by making the usual empty promise to pay his tribute regularly. Khizr Khan also took action against the ruler of Etawah. However, he died on 20th May, 1421 after designating his son Mubarak Khan as his successor.

### Estimate

As regards an estimate of Khizr Khan, he was truly a Sayyid. He hesitated from shedding blood without great necessity. He did not wreak vengeance on his enemies. He was busy all his life in suppressing revolts in various parts of his empire and consequently was not able to carry out any reforms. Ferishta pays the following tribute to Khizr Khan: "Khizr Khan was a great and wise king, kind and true to his words; his subjects loved him with a grateful affection so that great and small, master and servant sat and mourned for him in black raiment till the third day when they laid aside their mourning garments and raised his son Mubarak Shah to the throne."

### Mubarak Shah (1421-1434 A.D.)

Khizr Khan was succeeded by his son Mubarak Shah. A detailed account of his reign is to be found in **Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi** written by Yahya-bin-Ahmad. There were rebellions in all



parts of the conquest and punitive expeditions had to be undertaken to suppress them.

### Title

Mubarak Shah did find it necessary to regard the succession of his son as his overlord. No wonder, he freely used the royal title of Shah along with his own name. On his coins, he styled himself as *Muzaffar-i-Din Mubarak Shah*. The new ruler professed allegiance to the Khwaja alone.

### Policy of Transfers

Mubarak Shah continued most of the nobles in their fiefs and appointments which they had held during the previous reign. However, he pursued the policy of perpetually transferring the nobles from one fief to another. By doing so, he perhaps attained his object of preventing any one noble from acquiring a dangerous local influence in any district of the kingdom. However this was achieved at the cost of efficient administration. This also made the nobles discontented. This policy was partly responsible for his murder.

### Jasrath Khokhar

The reign of Mubarak Shah was disturbed by the activity of Jasrath Khokhar. It is stated in **Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi** that "Jasrath Khokhar was an imprudent rustic. Intoxicated with victory and elated with the strength of his forces, he began to have visions about Delhi. When he heard of the death of Khizr Khan, he passed the rivers Bivas (Beas) and Satladar (Sutlej) with a body of horse and foot and attacked Rai Kamal-ud-Din at Talwandi. Rai Firoz fled before him towards the desert. Jasrath next plundered the country, from the town of Ludhiana to the neighbourhood of Arohar (Rupar, on the Sutlej)." He then laid siege to the fort of Sarhind, but failed to take it. When Mubarak Shah marched towards Samana, Jasrath raised the siege of Sarhind and retreated to Ludhiana. When he was pursued, he ran away to the mountains. When the Sultan went back to Delhi, Jasrath crossed the Ravi and advanced upon Lahore. Jasrath was opposed by the Governor of Lahore and he retired to Kalanaur and from there to the mountains. Once again Jasrath revolted and defeated and killed in the battle his old enemy, Raja Bhim of Jammu, and overran and plundered the districts of Dipalpur and Lahore. Sikandar Tuhfa marched against him but retreated leaving him free to prepare for more extensive aggressions. Jasrath attacked Jullundur but failed to capture it. However, he plundered the district and carried off in slavery a large number of its inhabitants. However, Jasrath was defeated and driven into the hills. Jasrath took advantage of the difficulties of Mubarak Shah and revolted. He also marched on Jullundur and from there to Lahore and besieged the city. However, Jasrath was made to raise the siege of Lahore and ultimately driven into the mountains. Jasrath created trouble once again in 1432 but was once again driven into the mountains.

There was trouble in the Deccan, the rebel Mubarak Shah, the son of Muzaffar Shah, revolted and killed his father. He was defeated and fled to the Deccan. The Ruler of Kanpur and the Ruler of Jaunpur were visited. The Mewatis rebelled under the leadership of Jala and Qasim. However, they were defeated and were pardoned.

### Jaunpur

Muhammad Khan, Governor of Bihar, revolted but he was suppressed. Ibrahim Sharqi marched against Kanpur at the head of a considerable army. His brother marched into Etawah. Mubarak Shah sent his forces against the ruler of Jaunpur. As neither party was anxious to risk a battle, the operations were confined to the outposts for some time. In April 1428, Ibrahim Sharqi drew up his army for battle and Mubarak Shah devoted his nobles to lead his army into the field. The two armies fought, with moderate zeal and without any decisive result, from mid-day until sunset when each retired to its own camp. On the next day, Ibrahim Sharqi retreated toward Jaunpur. He was followed for some distance but Mubarak Shah ordered the pursuit to be stopped.

### Revolt of Paulad

A reference may be made to the revolt of Paulad Turk Baccha. The rebel was a slave of Sayyid Salim. He was able to collect a large number of followers and entrenched himself in the fortress of Bhatinda. Paulad agreed to surrender on the condition that the Sultan would spare his life. However, he foolishly believed a servant who said that the word of the Sultan was not to be relied upon and decided to continue resistance. Paulad asked for the help of Amir Shaikh Zada Ali Mughal, Governor of Kanpur and the Khokhar chiefs. The Governor of Kanpur reached Sarhind and the royal army withdrew. Paulad gave two lakhs of Tankas and other presents to Amir Shaikh Ali. The latter also plundered practically the whole of the Punjab. He got a year's revenue from Malik Sikandar and then proceeded towards Dipalpur. The neighbourhood of Multan was plundered. Ultimately, Amir Shaikh Zada Ali was defeated and he escaped to Kabul leaving his army behind and the latter was completely destroyed. Paulad was also defeated and killed. His head was brought to the Sultan in November 1433.

In 1432, Mubarak Shah invaded Mewat where Jalal Khan had revolted once again. He drove him from one stronghold to another and compelled him to purchase peace on the usual terms of a present payment and promise of amendment.

### Murder

Mubarak Shah found that Sarwar-ul-Mulk had not for some time past been performing satisfactorily his duties as Wazir. Consequently, he appointed Kamal-ul-Mulk as his co-adjutor in the hope that the two would work in harmony. However, he was disappointed. The influence of the able and more energetic Kamal-ul-Mulk eclipsed the influence of Sarwar-ul-Mulk. The

latter resented his virtual supersession. "His thoughts were now turned towards blood. His deprivation of the fief of Dipalpur had rankled like a thorn in his heart and his mind was now set on effecting some revolution in the state." He conspired with the sons of Kangu and Kajwi Khatri to take the life of the Sultan. When Mubarak Shah went to Mubarakabad to watch the progress of its construction, he was attacked on 20th February, 1434 by Adhu Pal, grandson of Kaju, who struck the Sultan with a sword on his head with such force that he at once fell down dead on the ground. Ranu and other Hindus rushed and completed the bloody work. The following is the tribute paid by a contemporary to Mubarak Shah: "A clement and generous sovereign full of excellent qualities."

According to Dr. Hameed-ud-Din, "Mubarak Shah proved to be the ablest king of the house of Khizr Khan. He endeavoured his best to preserve his father's gains and exhibited qualities of a brave warrior in overcoming the dangers that threatened his kingdom both from within and without. He was wise and resourceful, and had always at his disposal a loyal army of his own and that of his feudal allies which kept a watch on the important border posts of Lahore, Dipalpur and Multan in the north and west, and fought to maintain his position at strategic points in the south and east. He did not, however, display similar shrewdness in the choice and treatment of his ministers and officers, and his mistrust of some of them, resulting in frequent transfers of holders of key positions, produced disastrous consequences which contributed to his tragic end. He was just and kind towards all of his subjects, and though a firm Muslim in belief and action was free from the taint of bigotry. He patronized the Khatri of Delhi although some of them joined the plot against his life. He saved the Hindu state of Gwalior from Hushang's aggressions as keenly as he protected Kalpi against Ibrahim Sharqi's designs. Likewise, his treatment of Katehar and Etawah was perhaps far from severe as compared with the merciless sack of Mewat and the coercion of Bayana. Mubarak's architectural activity is evidenced by the founding of the new city of Mubarakabad in 1433 on the banks of the Yamuna with a big mosque. He also extended patronage to the contemporary chronicler, Yahya Sirhindi, whose well-known work, the *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, forms the most authoritative source of the history of the period." (*The Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 133-34.)

### **Muhammad Shah (1434-1444 A.D.)**

When Mubarak Shah died, he left no son. Consequently, the nobles put on the throne Muhammad Shah who was the son of his brother, Farid. It is true that the complicity of Sarwar-ul-Mulk in the murder of the Mubarak Shah was well-known, but it was not possible to take any action against him as he was too powerful to be touched. Although he was suspected of designs on the throne, it was found necessary to confirm him in his office. He received the title of Khan Jahan. His accomplices also were re-

warded. Sarwar-ul Mulk, with a view to intimidating his rivals, executed one officer of high rank and imprisoned others. He captured all the vacant fiefs in the kingdom and distributed them among his creatures. Bayana, Amroha, Narnaul, Guhram and some districts in the Doab were granted to Sindharan, Sidhu Pal and their relatives who were personally concerned in the murder of the late king. The nobles who still held their fiefs made preparations to overthrow Sarwar-ul-Mulk and the latter assembled an army to crush them. The rebels defeated the troops of Sarwar-ul-Mulk in a battle before the city of Delhi and besieged him for three months in Siri. Sarwar-ul Mulk discovered in the course of the siege that the king was in sympathy with the besiegers and attempted to kill him. However, Muhammad Shah was on his guard and his armed attendants slew Sarwar-ul-Mulk. They also killed the sons of Miran Sadr. Sidhu Pal burnt himself and his family. Sidharan and the other Khatri were captured alive and put to death. The result of the overthrow of Sarwar-ul-Mulk was that Kamal-ul-Mulk became minister and received the title of Kamal Khan. The other rebels were also suitably rewarded.

Up to the fall of Sarwar-ul-Mulk, Muhammad Shah had been the victim of factions and the sport of circumstances. However, when he got an opportunity of proving his fitness to rule, he abused it so much that he lost the affection and confidence of those who had freed him from his enemies. News of revolts came from various parts of the country but instead of taking any action against the rebels, Muhammad Shah remained in his capital sunk in indolence and pleasure. It was during this period that the commanding qualities of Bahlol Lodi, Governor of Sarhind, first attracted attention. He gradually extended his influence over the whole of Punjab and began to withhold the revenue due to the royal treasury. The authority of Muhammad Shah did not extend beyond Panipat. The tribesmen of Mewat plundered the country too within a short distance of the walls of the city. In 1440-41, Mahmud Shah Khalji of Malwa marched towards Delhi and Muhammad Shah asked Bahlol Lodi to help him. Bahlol Lodi demanded as his price for help the death of Hisam Khan, Governor of Delhi, in whom Bahlol Lodi recognised either a dangerous rival or a powerful champion of hereditary right. The condition was fulfilled and Bahlol Lodi sent his forces to the help of Muhammad Shah. The two armies confronted one another between Tughluqabad and the city of Delhi. The battle began at noon and lasted, without any decisive advantage to either side, until nightfall when each army returned to its own camp. Negotiations for peace started and the same was concluded. When the army of Mahmud Shah was retreating, Bahlol Lodi attacked its rear-guard and got some plunder. This petty triumph of Bahlol was magnified into a victory over the army of Malwa and Muhammad Shah honoured him by styling him as his son and conferred on him the title of Khan Khanan.

Bahlol Lodi professed loyalty to Muhammad Shah and the



latter bestowed upon him Dipalpur and Lahore. Bahlol decided to attack Jusrath Khokhar but later on made peace with him when he found that the Khokhar chief was not opposed to his designs on the throne of Delhi. Bahlol enlisted a large number of Afghans of his own tribe in the army. On trivial grounds, he picked up a quarrel with Muhammad Shah and marched on Delhi and besieged it. As he failed to capture it, he went back to his dominions and styled himself as Sultan Bahlol.

### **Alam Shah (1444-1451)**

When Muhammad Shah died in 1444, he was succeeded by his son Ala-ud-Din who took up the title of Alam Shah. The new king was even more feeble than his father but in spite of this Bahlol accepted his accession. In 1447, Alam Shah went to Badaon. He found the city so attractive that he decided to live there instead of living at Delhi. He appointed one of his relatives as the Governor of Delhi and retired in 1448 to Badaon permanently. There he gave himself up completely to the pursuit of pleasure. After the departure of Alam Shah from Delhi, there was a quarrel amongst those who were ruling it. Hisam Khan and Hamid Khan became the arbiters of the destiny of Delhi. The claims of various persons were considered and ultimately the choice fell on Bahlol Lodi. He was invited to Delhi. He responded to the invitation so quickly that he did not bring with him a sufficient force to stabilize his position in the capital. He received from Hamid Khan the keys of the city. He also wrote a letter to Alam Shah at Badaon and his reply was that he had neither fruit nor profit of sovereignty. His father had made Bahlol his son and he himself freely and cheerfully resigned his throne to Bahlol as to an elder brother. Thus, when Bahlol ascended the throne on 19th April, 1451, he did so not only as the creature of a successful faction but also as the heir-designate of a king who had voluntarily abdicated. Alam Shah continued to live in Badaon till he died in 1478 A.D.

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## CHAPTER XI

# The Lodi Dynasty (1451-1526)

### **Bahlol Lodi (1451-1489) : Early Life**

Bahlol Lodi was the founder of the Lodi dynasty which lasted from 1451 to 1526. He belonged to the Sahu Khail section of the Lodi clan. Malik Bahram, grandfather of Bahlol, migrated to Multan during the reign of Firuz Tughluq and took service under Malik Mardan Daulat, Governor of Multan. Malik Bahram had five sons but only two of them, namely, Malik Sultan Shah and Malik Kala became famous. Bahlol was the son of Malik Kala who had defeated Jasrath Khokhar and set himself up as an independent chief. In 1419, Sultan Shah, his uncle, was appointed the Governor of Sarhind by Khizr Khan and given the title of Islam Khan. Ferishta tells us that Islam Khan married his daughter to Bahlol and although he had his own sons, he nominated Bahlol as his heir on account of his ability. After the death of Islam Khan, Bahlol became the Governor of Sarhind. Bahlol was allowed to add Lahore to his charge. Thus, Bahlol became a very important Governor in the Sayyid empire on account of the strength of his forces. When Muhammad Shah was threatened by the invasion of Mahmud Shah Khalji of Malwa, he came to the help of his master. By his cleverness, he was able to show himself as a victor over the army of Malwa. Muhammad Shah was so much pleased that he called him as his son and gave him the title of Khan Khanan. The opportunity for Bahlol came as Alam Shah retired completely to Badaon in 1448 and there was trouble in Delhi. Bahlol was invited by Hamid Khan who also gave him the keys of the city. Bahlol also secured the consent of Alam Shah. Thus it was that on 19th April, 1451, Bahlol became the ruler and he continued to be so till his death in 1489.

There is a story that one day when Bahlol was in the service of his uncle, he went to Samana where he paid a visit to Sayyid Ayan, a famous Darvesh, with his friends. The Darvesh said : "Is there any one who wishes to obtain from him the empire of Delhi for two thousand Tankas?" Bahlol at once gave the money to the Darvesh who observed thus : "Be the Empire of Delhi blessed by Thee." The prophecy of the Darvesh came out to be true as stated above.

## Hamid Khan

It cannot be denied that Hamid Khan was instrumental in putting Bahlol Lodi on the throne of Delhi. No wonder, Bahlol asked Hamid Khan to become king and expressed his willingness to become merely the commander of his armies and carry out his orders. Bahlol also showed him great respect. However, Bahlol decided to dispose of Hamid Khan later on and hit upon a plan to achieve that objective. He asked his Afghan followers to pose themselves as rustics in the presence of Hamid Khan and "to adopt a conduct the most remote from good sense and common reason, in order to induce him to believe that they were thoughtless fellows, and of course banish all apprehension and fear of them from his heart." The Afghan followers of Bahlol did what they were asked to do. The men at arms crowded into the hall of audience on the pretext that all soldiers and fellow tribesmen were equals. Their conduct convinced Hamid Khan that he had to deal with mere simpletons. The number of Afghan troops was large enough to crush any disturbance which might arise in the city. Their number at the court was large enough to enable Bahlol to carry out any act of violence. One day, when Bahlol had gone to the residence of Hamid Khan to pay him a visit, his followers picked up a quarrel with the gate-keeper and requested him to allow them to go in. Hamid Khan did not suspect any treachery and granted their quest. However, he was surprised when Qutb Khan, a cousin and brother-in-law of Bahlol, placed before Hamid Khan chains he had concealed in his pocket and told him that it was considered necessary for reasons of state that he should be confined for a few days but in consideration of his services, his life was to be spared. The result was that Hamid Khan completely disappeared from the scene.

In order to strengthen his position, Bahlol tried to win over the confidence of the army by distributing gifts and bounties. The Amirs were won over by holding out promises of promotion and honour according to their ranks.

## Jaunpur

Although Bahlol was put on the throne, Mahmud Shah Sharqi, ruler of Jaunpur, tried to oust him. Mahmud Shah advanced to Delhi and besieged Khwaja Bayazid, the eldest son of Bahlol who had been left in charge of Delhi. Bahlol hastened towards Delhi and he was within 30 miles of the capital when Mahmud Shah succeeded in making an impression on its defences. Darya Khan Lodi who was helping Mahmud Shah of Jaunpur, was persuaded to leave him and after his departure, the rest of the army of Jaunpur was demoralised and fled. Thus failed the attempt of Mahmud Shah of Jaunpur to oust Bahlol Lodi from the throne.

The defeat of Mahmud Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur made a profound impression on both enemies and friends. The position of Bahlol was strengthened. His enemies and critics were silenced. Many chiefs and fief-holders were frightened into submission. Bahlol proceeded towards Mewat and secured the submission of Ahmad Khan who was deprived of seven Parganas. Darya Khan

Lodi, Governor of Sambhal, was treated leniently in spite of treason and was merely asked to give up seven Parganas. Isa Khan was allowed to retain all his possessions. A similar treatment was given to Mubarak Khan, Governor of Suket. Qutb Khan of Rewari also submitted after some hesitation. The heads of Etawah, Chandwar and other districts of the Doab acknowledged the authority of Bahlol. In 1472, Bahlol marched towards Multan to reduce to obedience Husain Shah Langah who had succeeded his father in that small kingdom.

Bahlol had to spend most of his time in fighting against Jaunpur and he ultimately succeeded in destroying its independence and annexing it. It has already been pointed out that Mahmud Shah made an attempt to oust Bahlol at the very beginning of his reign but he failed in his attempt. At the instigation of his queen, who was the daughter of Alam Shah of Badaon, Mahmud Shah Sharqi made another attempt to enter Delhi and with that object in view marched into Etawah. However, a treaty was made and it was agreed between the parties that both the rulers would retain possession of the territories which belonged to their predecessors. Bahlol Lodi was required to restore the elephants which had been captured by him in the last war. Mahmud Shah agreed to dismiss Juna Shah from his service. Acting upon the terms of the treaty, Bahlol tried to take possession of Shamsabad which the ruler of Jaunpur had given to Juna Khan. Bahlol was opposed by the forces of Jaunpur and Qutb Khan Lodi was captured. However, at this time, Mahmud Shah died in 1497 and his son Bhikan was raised to the throne under the title of Muhammad Shah. The latter made peace with Bahlol and acknowledged his right to retain Shamsabad. A revolution took place at Jaunpur as a result of which Husain Khan ascended the throne of Jaunpur. The new ruler was a remarkable person who continued to fight against Bahlol all his life with great perseverance. A four years' peace was concluded by Husain Shah with Bahlol but it turned out to be mere truce. In 1478, Husain Shah of Jaunpur, instigated by his wife Jalila, marched on Delhi with a large army. Bahlol was so much upset by the danger that he requested Mahmud Khalji II of Malwa to help him. Before any reply could come from Malwa, Husain Shah reached the banks of the Jamuna. Bahlol was prepared to offer very tempting terms to the invader but those were haughtily rejected. The result was that Bahlol came out of the capital to fight against the enemy. The camp of Husain Shah had been left unprotected and Bahlol crossed the river by a ford and fell upon it. When the Afghans began actually to plunder his tents, Husain Shah decided to run away. Even the ladies of his harem, including Jalila, were captured by Bahlol, who, however, generously sent them to Jaunpur without allowing any harm to be done to them.

Another truce for three years was arranged. After that, Husain Shah captured Etawah and marched on Delhi with an army of one lac horse and 100 elephants. Bahlol once again made many humble suggestions for a settlement but those were rejected by Husain Shah. Bahlol was once again successful in defeating the army of



Jaunpur. In spite of this, Husain Shah marched against Bahlol and the two armies met at a distance of about 25 miles from Delhi. Husain Shah was again defeated but was able to make peace on equal terms.

Husain Shah made another attempt and in March 1479 arrived at the banks of the Jamuna. This was the most promising of all his campaigns. However, he was induced to make peace on obtaining from Bahlol the formal recognition of his tenure of all districts east of the Ganges. After making the treaty, Husain Shah began a leisurely retreat but he was treacherously attacked by Bahlol who was able to capture a large number of elephants and horses laden with spoils and treasure. This success marks the turn of the tide in favour of Bahlol and the latter pursued the demoralised army of Jaunpur and occupied the Parganas of Kampil, Patiali, Shamsabad, Suket, Koil, Marhara and Jalesar. Husain Shah tried to face Bahlol but was defeated. He was forced to agree to the retention by Bahlol of the large part of territory which he had recovered. Husain Shah retired to Rapri and Bahlol to Delhi but Husain Shah once again took the field to get back his lost territory. However, he was defeated by Bahlol at *Senha*. This has been described as the heaviest defeat he had experienced so far. The plunder which fell into the hands of Bahlol and the prestige which he gained with his victory established the superiority of Delhi. Bahlol took the initiative and defeated Husain Shah at Rapri. After capturing Etawah, Bahlol marched to attack Husain Shah who turned to meet him at Raigaon Khaga. However, Husain Shah was forced to retreat and Bahlol marched straight on Jaunpur and Husain Shah fled towards Kanauj. Bahlol followed him and overtook him on the banks of the Rahab. He attacked him and defeated and captured one of his wives. Bahlol went back to Jaunpur and captured it and put it under Mubarak Khan Lohani as its governor.

Bahlol also went to Badaon which had been nominally subject to Husain Shah after the death of Alam Shah in 1478. Husain Shah took advantage of the absence of Bahlol and marched on Jaunpur. Mubarak Khan was forced to withdraw. The officers of Bahlol gained some time by starting negotiations and in the meanwhile Bahlol came back from Badaon and re-occupied Jaunpur. Husain Shah ran away to Bihar and he was pursued by the troops of Bahlol. In 1486, Bahlol placed his eldest surviving son Barbak on the throne of Jaunpur.

### Estimate of Bahlol

Bahlol was not only the founder of the Lodi dynasty but was responsible for its strength and glory. He was successful in subduing the various chiefs who could defy the central power. He was able to establish the prestige of the empire on a firm footing. His great achievement was the annexation of Jaunpur which defied him for many years.

Bahlol was forced to spend most of his time in fighting wars and consequently there was hardly any time left for civil administration.

Bahlol was brave, generous, humane and honest. He did not believe in any show. His view was that as he was known to be king, nothing else was required to be displayed to impress this fact on the people. He was very kind to the poor and no beggar was allowed to go away disappointed. He loved justice and personally listened to the complaints of the people. He distributed all that he had among his troops. He did not put on airs of superiority while dealing with fellow Afghans. According to the author of **Tarik-i-Daudi**, "In his social meetings, he never sat on a throne and would not allow his nobles to stand; and even during public audiences he did not occupy the throne, but seated himself upon a carpet. Whenever he wrote a firman to his nobles, he addressed them as **Masnad Ali**; and if at any time they were displeased with him, he tried so hard to pacify them that he would himself go to their houses, ungird his sword from his waist, and place it before the offended party; nay, he would sometimes even take off his turban from his head and solicit forgiveness, saying: 'If you think me unworthy of the station I occupy, choose some one else, and bestow on me some other office.' He maintained a brotherly intercourse with his chiefs and soldiers. If any one was ill, he would himself go and attend on him."

Dr. A. B. Pandey sums up his estimate of Bahlol in these words: "His qualities of leadership were of a high order. He knew the material he had to use and moved warily about his business. He treated his nobles and even his soldiers as his brethren. If anybody fell ill he would go to his place to enquire about his health. This won for him implicit loyalty of his followers who neither wavered in their obedience to him nor considered any risks too great when he was present at their head. It was not merely in formal courtesies that he showed his concern for the Afghan and Mughal soldiery. Ferishta says that when he captured the treasures of the kings of Delhi, he distributed the spoils among his followers and took for himself only a proportionate share. Rizquallah goes further and says, 'Bahlol was very religious, brave and of a generous disposition. He did not disappoint any supplicant, nor did he collect a treasure. Whatever lands he conquered, he distributed among his followers. He did all this because he realized the imperative need for an army consisting of numerous, satisfied and brave soldiers'. He did not hesitate to use local talent wherever practicable and we find the names of Rai Karna, Raja Pratap, Rai Bir Singh, Rai Trilokchand and Rai Dhandhu among recipients of his favours. There were some persons, however, whom Bahlol could not permanently win over to his side. Personal ambition, unsettled political conditions, local intrigue and shifting fortunes of war rendered his task difficult. That is why we hear of Qutb Khan, Raja Pratap and Ahmad Khan Mewati changing sides so often. Ahmad Khan Jalwani of Bavana even had the Khutba read in the name of Sultan Husain Shah Sharqi, when the latter's star was on the ascendant. But when a balance has been struck between success and failure and due regard is paid to the circumstances in which Bahlol had to act, it would be admitted that his achievement was remarkable. He had begun his career as an orphan, had steadily risen to fame and had not merely captured the throne of

Delhi but was regarded by competent contemporary observers, both friendly and hostile, to be marked out for that high destiny. He found the Sultanate of Delhi in the last stages of disintegration. He had arrested the rot, had infused fresh vigour into its bones and the Sultanate of Delhi had begun to show signs of fresh lease of life and vitality. Refractory chiefs were brought to book, a neighbouring kingdom was virtually liquidated and the dominions were rounded off towards the south and west.

"What is more to his credit, he was no mere militarist or warlord. He was a man of humane spirit and wanted to promote public welfare by ensuring law and order, administering justice and refraining from burdening his people with insupportable taxes. To the poor and the indigent, he was always kind and generous. In short, he was a fairly popular and successful monarch." (*The First Afghan Empire in India*, pp. 97-98.)

### **Sikandar Shah (1489-1517)**

Bahlol Lodi was succeeded by his son Nizam Khan who took up the title of Sikandar Shah. There was some hesitation on the part of the nobles to accept Sikandar Shah as their ruler as his mother was the daughter of a goldsmith and her son was more of a plebian than a prince. However, this hesitation was overcome and he became king. Sikandar was an orthodox Muslim and his bigotry must have been considered as a special qualification for election to the throne.

### **Condition in 1489**

The position of Sikandar Shah at the time of his accession to the throne was not very strong as there were a large number of vassals and chieftains who exercised a lot of power and authority in their respective spheres. The author of *Waqiat-i-Mustaqi* gives the following picture of India at that time: "One-half of the whole country was assigned in jagir to the Farmulis, and the other half to the other Afghan tribes. At this time the Lohanis and Farmulis predominated. The chief of the Sarwanis was Azam Humayun and the principal chieftains of the Lodis were four: Mahmud Khan who had Kalpi in jagir; Mian Alam to whom Etawah and Chandwar were assigned; Mubarak Khan whose jagir was Lucknow; and Daulat Khan who held Lahore. Among the Sahu Khails, the chiefs were Husain Khan and Khan Jahan, both from the same ancestor as Sultan Bahlol; Husain Khan, son of Piruz Khan, and Qutb Khan Lohi Sahu Khail, who flourished in the time of Sultan Bahlol.

"The districts of Saran and Champaran were held by Mian Hussain; Oudh, Ambala and Hodhna by Mian Muhammad Kala Pahar; Kanauj by Mian Gadai; Shamsabad, Thanesar and Shahabad by Mian Imad; Maraha by Tatar Khan, brother of Mian Muhammad; and Hariana, Desua, and other detached parganas by Khwaja Shaikh Said.

"Among the great nobles of Sultan Sikandar's time was Saif



Khan Acha-Khail. He had 6,000 horses under him, and was deputy of Azam Humayun, Jagirdar of Kara, who used to buy 2,000 copies of the Quran every year, had 45,000 horse under his command, and 700 elephants. There were also Daulat Khan Khani, who had 4,000 cavalry; Ali Khan Ushi, who had 4,000 also; and Firuz Khan Sarwani, who had 6,000. Amongst other nobles there were 25,000 more distributed. Ahmad Khan also, the son of Jumal Khan Lodi Sarang Khani, when he was appointed to Jaunpur, had 20,000 cavalry under him."

### **Action Against Alam Khan**

Sikandar Shah was forced to take action against his uncle, Alam Khan, who was trying to become independent in Rapri and Chandwar. When he was besieged in Rapri, he ran away from there and took refuge in Patiali with Isa Khan who had revolted on account of his having insulted the mother of Sikandar Shah. Sikandar gave the fief of Rapri to Khan Khanan Lohani and himself retired to Etawah. He spent there seven months in reorganising the Administration of the provinces and conciliating those who were prepared to accept his succession as an accomplished fact. Sikandar Shah was successful in persuading Alam Khan to leave Isa Khan and also gave him the fief of Etawah. Sikandar Shah himself marched against Isa Khan and defeated him. Raja Ganesh submitted and was given the fief of Patiali.

### **Action against Barbak Shah**

Sikandar Shah tried to come to terms with Barbak Shah, his brother, who was the ruler of Jaunpur. He wanted him to recognise him as his lord. Barbak Shah was instigated by Husain Shah Sharqi to attack his brother and when Sikandar came to know of it, he marched against Barbak Shah. Barbak Shah was defeated and he ran away to Badaon. He was pursued there and ultimately made to surrender. In spite of this, Sikandar treated Barbak Shah with great leniency and put him once again on the throne of Jaunpur. However, not much power was left in his hands as Sikandar distributed the important fiefs among his followers and also placed confidential agents in the household of Barbak.

### **Action against Jaunpur and Husain Shah**

After some time, there was a serious rebellion in Jaunpur where the Hindu landholders assembled an army of one lac horse and foot and put to death Sher Khan, brother of the Governor of Kara. The Governor of Kara himself was captured and imprisoned by them. Barbak Shah of Jaunpur was not able to deal with the situation. The rebels opposed the advance of the royal army but they were defeated with great slaughter and dispersed. Sikandar once again reinstated his brother and retired towards Oudh. However, he learnt that Barbak Shah was having some dealings with the rebels and Husain Shah Sharqi. Sikandar got him arrested and he was brought before the king. From Jaunpur, Sikandar marched to Chunar where a number of nobles of Husain Shah were assembled. He defeated them but was not strong enough to lay siege to Chunar.



Husain Shah marched from Bihar with all the forces which he could command and 100 elephants. Sikandar also advanced towards Banaras. From there he marched to attack Husain Shah. Sikandar was able to inflict a crushing defeat on Husain Shah and he pursued him towards Patna with one lac horse. On learning that Husain Shah was continuing his flight from Patna, he marched with his whole army to Bihar. Husain Shah fled towards Lakhnauti where he passed the rest of his life in obscurity. Bihar easily came into the hands of the Khan Khanan in 1495 and the whole of the country was settled by the Sultan.

### **Treaty with Bengal**

The invasion of Bihar aroused the hostility of Ala-ud-Din Husain Shah, the active and warlike ruler of Bengal. He resented the pursuit of his protege and violation of his frontiers. The ruler of Bengal hesitated to march in person against the king of Delhi and deputed his son for that purpose. Neither party had anything to gain by proceeding to extremities and consequently a treaty was concluded. It was agreed that neither party was to invade the dominion of the other. The ruler of Bengal promised not to help the enemies of Sikandar Shah.

Sikandar Shah remained for some time in Bihar but his army suffered from famine. From there he went to Jaunpur where he reorganised the administration. During his stay at Jaunpur, the conduct of some of his nobles annoyed Sikandar Shah. One noble accidentally struck another on the head with his stick while playing polo with the king and there was a disturbance. Although the parties were separated, they started the quarrel on the following day and the king caused one of them to be flogged. The king was forced to take precautions for his personal safety. In spite of that, a conspiracy was made to depose him and put his brother Fateh Khan on the throne. The conspiracy was found out and the conspirators were banished from the court.

### **Action against Nobles**

Sikandar Shah took action against the Afghan nobles. He ordered the auditing of the accounts of some of the nobles and although his order was resented, the Sultan was successful in his object. There were some minor rebellions but those were crushed.

### **Foundations of Agra**

Sikandar Shah was responsible for the foundation of the city of Agra. The decision was due to the fact that the Sultan wanted to have more effective control over the fief-holders of Etawah, Biyana, Koil, Gwalior and Dholpur. The new city of Agra was founded in 1504 A.D. and very soon a beautiful town came into existence. The Sultan also transferred his residence from Delhi to Agra.

In 1505 A.D., there was an earthquake. "It was in fact so terrible that mountains were overturned and all lofty edifices dashed to the ground: the living thought, the day of judgment

was to come ; and the dead, the day of resurrection." The area affected by the earthquake was very large. As a matter of fact, it was general throughout India. Badaoni tells us that the earthquake extended to Persia. There was too much loss of life and property.

### **Narwar**

In 1508, Sikandar Shah marched to attack Narwar which was usually included in the kingdom of Malwa but was now subject to Gwalior. There was fighting for some days and that was followed by a general attack on the fortress. Under the stress of famine and want of water, the garrison of Utgir surrendered on certain terms and Sikandar Shah entered the fortress. However, Sikandar Shah destroyed all the Hindu temples and ordered the construction of mosques on their sites.

### **Chanderi**

The fort of Chanderi was captured and given to Afghan officers. In 1510, Muhammad Khan, Governor of Nagpur, submitted and caused the Khutba to be read in the name of the Sultan. The Prince of Chanderi expressed a desire to accept Sikandar Shah as his over-lord. The prince was allowed to remain nominally in possession of the city of Chanderi but its administration was given to the leading Afghan officers.

The last expedition was undertaken by Sikandar Shah at the instance of Ali Khan of Nagpur. Ali Khan was a treacherous man and having gone against Sikandar asked the Governor not to surrender. The result was that Ali Khan was deprived of his fief. Sikandar Shah died on 21st November, 1517 A.D.

### **Internal Administration**

It is true that Sikandar Shah had to spend a lot of time in fighting but he was able to find some time to look to administration. He was able to weaken the various chiefs and thereby strengthen his own position. He insisted on the auditing of the accounts of the Afghan nobles even at the risk of their displeasure. When the accounts of Mubarak Khan Lodi after the Bengal campaign were examined, no leniency was shown to him. The balance of the amount was realised from him promptly. With the help of an efficient system of spies, the Sultan was able to get information from every nook and corner of the country. The personal retainers of the great Amirs were appointed by the king himself. The Sultan encouraged agriculture and abolished corn duties. Traders and merchants were helped in every way to do their work in peace and security. Under the orders of the Sultan, lists of poor persons were prepared every year and they were given rations for 6 months. Prisoners were released on certain days in a year. The Sultan listened to the petitions of the aggrieved persons and disposed of cases according to their merit. The Sultan had a good memory and was able to collect a lot of useful knowledge. He patronised the learned people and himself wrote poetry in Persian. It was under his patronage that Mian Bhua translated into Persian a Sanskrit work on medicine

known as Tibbi Sikandari. No one was deprived of his Jagir arbitrarily. An established custom was never abrogated. The author of **Tarikh-i-Daudi** tells us that "Every business had its appointed time and custom once fixed was never changed. When the Sultan had once allowed a particular meat or drink, he never altered it. A man of note came from Jaunpur to visit him in the hot weather and was given 6 jars of **Sherbet** with his food on account of the heat and thirst; but when he came again in winter he still had six jars of **Sherbet** to drink. The Sultan always behaved to the nobles and great men in exactly the same way for many years as he did on the first day."

The same author tells us that "The Sultan daily received an account of the prices of all things and an account of what had happened in the different districts of the Empire. If he perceived the slightest appearance of anything wrong, he caused instant inquiries to be made about it ..... In his reign, business was carried on in a peaceful, honest, straightforward way. The study of belles-letters was not neglected..... Factory establishments were so encouraged that all the young nobles and soldiers were engaged in useful works ..... All the nobles and soldiers of Sikandar were satisfied: each of his chiefs was appointed to the government of a district, and it was his especial desire to gain the goodwill and affections of the body of the people. For the sake of his officers and troops, he put an end to war and dispute with the other monarchs and nobles of the period, and closed the road to contention and strife. He contented himself with the territory bequeathed him by his father, and passed the whole of his life in the greatest safety and enjoyment, and gained the hearts of high and low."

### **Religious Bigotry**

However, there is one blot on his character which cannot be ignored. Sikandar Shah was a fanatical Muslim and he did a lot to injure the feelings of his Hindu subjects. On one occasion, Sikandar Shah ordered the temples of Mathura to be destroyed and Sarais and mosques were constructed in their places. The idols were given to butchers who made them into meat weights. In the case of Utgir, the Hindu temples were destroyed and mosques were raised on their sites. After the surrender of Mandrael in 1505 Sikandar Shah destroyed the Hindu temples in the town and erected mosques on their sites. He also plundered and laid waste the districts surrounding the fortress. A Brahman of Bengal publicly maintained that Islam and Hinduism were both true and God could be approached by following any one of them. Azam-i-Humayun, Governor of Bihar, was directed to send the Brahman and two doctors of the Islamic law to the court. Theologians were summoned from various parts of the kingdom to consider whether it was permissible to preach peace. Their decision was that as the Brahman had admitted the truth of Islam, he should be asked to embrace it and in case he refused to do so, he should be put to death. The decision was accepted by Sikandar Shah and as the Brahman refused to embrace Islam, he was put to death. Sikandar Shah broke the sacred images



of the Jwalamukhi temple at Nagarkot. The Hindus were not allowed to have their bath at the Ghats on the banks of the Jamuna. The barbers were prohibited from shaving the heads and beards of the Hindus in accordance with their usual custom. All this must have alienated the feelings of the Hindus against the Lodi dynasty.

### Estimate

According to Sir Wolseley Haig, "He was the greatest of the three kings of his house and carried out with conspicuous success the task left unfinished by his father. We hear little of the Punjab during his reign and he drew no troops from it to aid him in his eastern campaigns, but there are indications that it was more tranquil and more obedient to the crown than it had been in his father's reign. His vigorous administration amply justified the choice of the minority, which, in the face of strong opposition, raised him to the throne and his selection saved the kingdom from becoming the plaything of an oligarchy of turbulent, ignorant, and haughty Afghans. His weakest action was his support of his hopelessly incompetent brother Barbak, but this weakness was an amiable trait in a character by no means rich in such traits. He seems to have had a sincere affection for his brother, and to have felt that he owed him some reparation for having supplanted him in his birth right, but when he discovered that leniency was a mistaken policy he knew how to act.

"The greatest blot on his character was his relentless bigotry. The accounts of his conquests, doubtless exaggerated by pious historians, resemble those of the raids of the protagonists of Islam in India. The wholesale destruction of temples was not the best method of conciliating the Hindus of a conquered district and the murder of a Brahman whose only offence was the desire for an accommodation between the religions of the conquerors and the conquered was not a political act, but Sikandar's mind was wrapped by habitual association with theologians." (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 246.)

About Sikandar Lodi, Dr. Pandey says that all authorities speak in superlatives about his physical charms. There are many who say that he was equally adorned with excellence of head and heart. He was credited with great intelligence, discernment and moderation. He was a fair judge of men and none of his highest officers played him false. Rizquallah calls him magnanimous, religious, brave and just. There are many stories about his generosity. There are references to the distribution of cooked and uncooked food, coined money and other articles on Friday, in the month of Ramzan, on the Barawfat and on the 10th day of Muharram. If we can trust Abdullah and other Afghan historians, provision for such charities was made throughout the Empire and a body of God-fearing persons was deputed to make enquiries at the spot and to satisfy the wants of the poor and godly people. Sikandar was neither greedy nor miserly and the fruits of his liberality were shared not merely by a select group of courtiers and metropolitans but his charity was broad-based and was intended to alleviate the sufferings of the people as a whole.



Dr. Pandey also points out that Sikandar Lodi was a great patron of learning and he loved the company of learned men. His benevolence and patronage attracted them to his court from Persia, Arabia and different parts of India. Rizqullah Mushtaqi was an author of repute both in Hindi and Persian. Mian Bhuva, the Wazir of Sikandar Lodi, had collected around him a band of able physicians and doctors of medicine who compiled a highly authoritative work called *Tibb-i-Sikandar Shah* or *Maha-Ayuraidik*. He also got together a group of calligraphists and learned men who were continually employed in copying and compiling books on every science. Sikandar himself was well acquainted with Persian literature and wrote verses under the pen-name of Gulrukhi. Yadgar says that when Sikandar Lodi heard about Shaikh Jamal Dehlawi's return from his travels through Iraq, Arabia, Syria and Egypt etc., he invited him to his court and the latter stayed with him for two years. Sikandar Lodi had a genuine taste for learning and his encouragement of the learned and interest in their work must have contributed to its progress. Sikandar Lodi was a devout and orthodox Muslim who said his prayers regularly. He kept the fast in the month of Ramzan and spent a good deal of his time at night in religious study and meditation. He was always accompanied by a select group of 17 theologians whom he consulted, whenever necessary, to ensure strict conformity with the holy law.

Dr. Pandey concludes by saying that although "he was at times consumed with jealousy, restrained by timidity or deceived by soft words, he was on the whole a better and a greater administrator than either his father or his son. He improved the administration of justice; reduced the power of the nobility by transfers, audits and personal supervision; enhanced the prestige of the sovereign; and ministered to the general welfare and happiness of his subjects. Sikandar was, thus quite remarkable both as a man and as the head of a growing empire, and even a conservative estimate would rank him among the greatest Muslim rulers of Delhi, in the Sultanate period." (*The First Afghan Empire in India*, pp. 159-60.)

### **Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526)**

After the death of Sikandar Shah, his eldest son, Ibrahim, was put on the throne on 21st November, 1517 with the unanimous consent of the Afghan nobles and he took up the title of Ibrahim Shah.

### **Action against Prince Jalal**

There were a few nobles who advocated for their own selfish ends a partition of the kingdom. They carried Jalal Khan, a younger brother of Ibrahim, to Jaunpur and put him on the throne. This suicidal policy of dividing the kingdom was condemned by Khan Jahan Lohani, Governor of Rapri. The result was that the Afghan nobles acknowledged their mistake and sent Haibat Khan, 'the wolf-slayer', to persuade Jalal Khan to withdraw from Jaunpur. However, Jalal Khan refused to withdraw from Jaunpur. It was then that Ibrahim issued a Firman by which he ordered the Amirs not to

obey Jalal and threatened to punish them if they disobeyed. Jalal Khan allied himself with the Zamindars and improved his position. He was joined by Azam Humayun who also had a grouse against Ibrahim. Ibrahim confined all his brothers in the fort of Hansi and personally marched against Jalal Khan. Kalpi was besieged and the fort was dismantled. Jalal Khan fled towards Agra where the Governor entered into negotiations with him. When Ibrahim came to know of these negotiations, he disapproved of them and passed orders for the assassination of Jalal Khan. The latter took refuge with the Raja of Gwalior. When the fort of Gwalior was captured, he fled towards Malwa. He was captured by the Zamindars of Gondwana and handed over to Ibrahim. While he was being conveyed to Hansi, he was put to death on the way by the orders of the king.

### Action against Azam Humayun

Ibrahim Shah called Azam Humayun from Gwalior on mere suspicion and put him and his son Fateh Khan in prison. Islam Khan, another son of Azam Humayun, was deprived of his governorship of Kara-Manikpur. There was a lot of resentment on account of the action taken against Azam Humayun. The rebels collected a large army consisting of 40,000 cavalry, 500 elephants and also a large infantry. The efforts of Shaikh Raju Bokhari, a holy man, to bring about a reconciliation between the parties failed. Ibrahim refused to accept the demand of the rebels that Azam Humayun be released. Negotiations having failed, there was a bitter fighting and there was a lot of bloodshed. To quote the author of **Malohzan-i-Afghans**, "Dead bodies, heap upon heap, covered the field; and the number of heads lying upon the ground is beyond the reach of recollection. Streams of blood ran over the plain; and whenever for a length of time, a fierce battle took place in Hindustan, the old men always observed, that with this battle no other one was comparable; brothers, fighting against brothers, fathers against sons, inflamed by mutual shame and innate bravery; bows and arrows were laid aside, and the carnage carried on with daggers, swords, knives and javelins." The ultimate result was that Islam Khan was killed in the battle-field. Said Khan was captured. The rebels suffered terrible losses.

### War with Rana Sanga

There is a reference to a war between Ibrahim and Rana Sanga of Mewar. It is stated that Ibrahim organised a large army for the invasion of Mewar and put it under very experienced generals. Mian Husain went over to the side of Rana Sanga at the beginning but later on treacherously deserted him at the crucial moment. The Afgans fell upon the Rajputs and killed a large number of them. Rana Sanga escaped but his followers were butchered. It is to be noted that excepting **Tarkhi-i-Salatini-Afghana**, **Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi** and **Tarkhi-Daudi**, no other authority refers to this expedition. **Nizam-ud-Din Badauni** and **Firishtha** are silent on the point. There is no mention of this

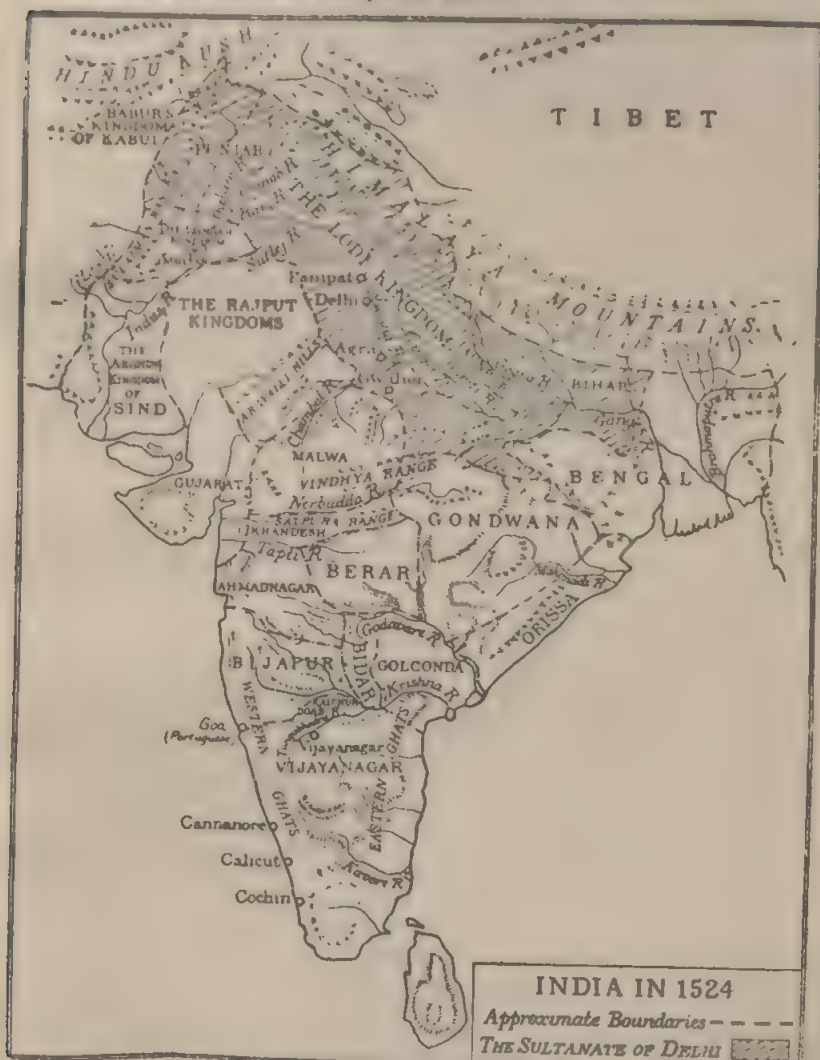
war in the Rajput chronicles. According to Tod, "Sanga organised his forces with which he always kept the field, and when called to contend with the descendant of Timur, he gained 18 pitched battles against the kings of Delhi and Malwa. In two of these, he was opposed by Ibrahim Lodi in person at Bakrol and Ghatoli; in which last battle the imperial forces were defeated with great slaughter leaving a prisoner of the blood royal to grace that triumph of Chittor." It appeared that the statement of Ahmad Yadgar regarding the victory of Ibrahim over Rana Sanga is not correct.

### Nobles

Ibrahim wanted to strengthen his position at the cost of his nobles and he did all that he could to humble them. He imprisoned Mian Bhua who was one of his father's leading nobles. His only offence was that he was careless of forms and he acted as he thought best in the interests of his master without always troubling to obtain the formal approval of his proceedings. The old man died in prison and his death sapped the fidelity of his son although he was otherwise generously treated. Azam Humayun was treacherously assassinated in prison. Jalal Khan was put to death by the orders of the king when he was being actually taken to the fort of Hansi for imprisonment. Even the greatest nobles feared their safety. No wonder, Darya Khan, Khan-i-Jahan Lodi and Husain Khan Farmuli revolted against the Sultan. Husain Khan Famuli was killed in his bed by some holy men of Chanderi. Bahadur Khan, son of Darya Khan, took up the title of Muhammad Shah and defied the authority of Ibrahim. Ibrahim cruelly treated Dilawar Khan, son of Daulat Khan Lodi, Governor of the Punjab. When Daulat Khan Lodi was summoned to the capital by Ibrahim, the former excused himself on the ground that he would come later on with the treasure of the State and sent his son Dilawar Khan at once. While in Delhi Dilawar Khan was taken by Ibrahim to the prison where the victims of his anger were suspended from the walls Ibrahim addressed Dilawar Khan in these words: "Have you seen the condition of those who have disobeyed me?" It is stated that Dilawar Khan made his submission before Ibrahim but somehow managed to escape to his father and told him all that he had seen and experienced at the capital. It was under these circumstances that Daulat Khan Lodi sent an invitation to Babur to invade India.

The various authorities differ on this point. It is stated in the Makhzan that Daulat Khan entered into an alliance with Ghazi Khan and other Amirs of the Punjab and addressed an invitation to Babur through Alam Khan. The statement of Firishhta is that finding no safety for his family, Daulat Khan Lodi revolted and asked Babur to conquer India. Before the invasion of Babur, Alam Khan, uncle or brother of Ibrahim, had fled from Ibrahim Lodi and was residing at Kabul. The view of Ahmad Yadgar is that Dilawar Khan was sent to Babur to invite him to invade India. The author of *Tarikh-i-Khan-i-Jahan Lodi* states

that invitation to Kabul was sent through Alam Khan. The latter marched to Delhi but he was defeated by Ibrahim who himself was defeated in the battle of Panipat in 1526.



It appears that the real object of Daulat Khan was to use Babur as a tool in establishing his own power on the Punjab. Alam Khan was to be put on the throne of Delhi and the Punjab was to remain with Daulat Khan. It is stated that in 1524, Babur invaded the Punjab and easily captured Lahore. Babar gave the fiefs of Jullundur and Sultanpur to Daulat Khan but as Daulat Khan did not behave well, those were taken away from him and given to his own son Dilawar Khan. Babar went back to Kabul



after making arrangements for the administration of the Punjab. As soon as Babar was away, Daulat Khan took away the fief of Sultanpur from his son and turned out Alam Khan from Dipalpur. Alam Khan went to Kabul and complained to Babar. It was under these circumstances that Babar started for the second time from Kabul and fought the battle of Panipat in 1526. Ibrahim was killed in the battle-field and Babar turned out to be the victor. The battle of Panipat ended the Lodi dynasty and brought in the rule of the Mughals.

Rushbrook Williams ascribes the defeat of Ibrahim Lodi to the artillery of Babar. To quote him, "If there was one single material factor which more than any other conduced to his ultimate triumph in Hindustan, it was his powerful artillery." However, Dr. A B. Pandey points out that Babar himself does not emphasize the role of artillery so much as that of archery, coupled with Ibrahim's utter incompetence as a general so that he neither moved nor halted according to plan. Yadgar finds in the dissatisfaction of the Afghans the key to Ibrahim's defeat and death. All these views partially explain the event. "Other factors which contributed to Babar's success were treachery of Ibrahim's nobles, his own freedom from Central Asian troubles, and his scientific methods of warfare and seasoned generalship in contrast to Ibrahim's outmoded tactics, hand capped as they were by the presence of too many soldiers and elephants that caused confusion in their own ranks when pressed back by a deadly fire." (*The First Afghan Empire in India* pp. 211-2.)

As regards an estimate of Ibrahim, he was in some respects like his father and grandfather. He was intelligent, courageous and brave. He had some reputation for piety and orthodoxy. Like his father, he was interested in music. As a man, he was generous and kind, but as a ruler, he had many shortcomings which were heightened by the adverse circumstances in which he was placed. He had a certain amount of vanity and he demanded more implicit obedience than was customary among the Afghans. He was reckless in punishing all those whom he suspected of treachery or disaffection. In political dealings, he neither forgave nor forgot and hence he often appeared vindictive. His treatment of the nobility was on the whole tactless and indiscreet. He could make enemies but could not convert men of doubtful loyalty into devoted servant by his magnanimity. He attached too much importance to discipline, obedience and humility among his subordinates but did not know how to secure them. His policy was calculated to provoke opposition and rebellion. He lacked qualities of generalship and seldom took the field himself. Even when he did so, he gave little evidence of anything other than courage and determination. He failed to maintain his authority over local officers and provincial governors. He started well but failed afterwards. On account of his own acts of omission and commission, discontentment continued to increase and the result was that by 1526, he was surrounded by enemies on all sides. He was no match for Babar and no wonder he lost the game.

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## CHAPTER XII

# Disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate

The disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate started even during the reigns of Muhammad Tughluq and Firuz Tughluq and the process could not be checked by their incompetent successors. The situation was no better during the reign of the Sayyid and Lodi rulers and the result was that there came into existence a large number of independent dynasties in various parts of the erstwhile Delhi Sultanate. An attempt is made in this chapter to give some details about these dynasties. However, the Bahmani kingdom and Vijayanagar Empire have been dealt with in separate chapters on account of their importance.

### Jaunpur

The city of Jaunpur was founded by Firuz Tughluq to perpetuate the memory of his cousin and patron, Muhammad Tughluq, also known as Prince Juna Khan. In 1376, when a fresh distribution of the territories was made, Jaunpur and Zafarabad fell to the lot of Malik Bahruz Sultan. After the death of Firuz Tughluq in 1388, there was nothing of importance to record until the rise of Khwaja Jahan to power. The original name of Khwaja Jahan was Malik Sarwar. He was a eunuch. The title of Khwaja Jahan was given to him in 1389 and he was given the rank of Wazir. In 1394, Khwaja Jahan received from Mahmud Tughluq the title of Malik-us Sharq or the Lord of the East. The administration of all Hindustan from Kanauj to Bihar was entrusted to him. Khwaja Jahan was able to suppress the rebellions in Etawah, Koil and Kanauj. He was also able to bring under his control Kara, Oudh, Sandila, Dalmau, Bahraich, Bihar and Tirhut. The Rai of Jajnagar and ruler of Lakhnauti acknowledged his authority and sent him the number of elephants which they formerly used to send to Delhi. He took advantage of the confusion caused by the invasion of Timur and declared himself independent and took up the title of Atabak-i-Azam.

When he died in 1399, he was succeeded by his adopted son Malik Qaranfal who took up the title of **Mubarak Shah**. He was the first to take up the title of the king and struck coins in his own name. The Khutba was also read in his name. It was during his reign that Mallu Iqbal tried to recover Jaunpur but he failed. Mubarak Shah died in 1402 and he was succeeded by Ibrahim Shah.

**Ibrahim Shah** ruled for 34 years from 1402 to 1436. He was a great patron of learning. He established many schools and colleges. The result was that a large number of scholarly works on Islamic theology, law and other subjects were produced. A large number of beautiful buildings were constructed in the city of Jaunpur. A new style of architecture known as Sharqi style was developed. In this style, the mosques did not have minarets of the usual type and also showed traces of Hindu influence. It was during his reign that Jaunpur got the title of "Shiraz of India".

During the reign of Ibrahim Shah, the relations between Delhi and Jaunpur became bitter. When Mahmud Tughluq ran away from Delhi to Jaunpur in order to free himself from the tyranny of Mallu Iqbal, he was not treated nicely by Ibrahim Shah. The result was that Mahmud Shah took forcible possession of the district of Kanauj which was a part of the kingdom of Jaunpur. In 1407, Ibrahim Shah tried to turn out Mahmud Tughluq from Kanauj but failed. Ibrahim Shah also tried to conquer Bengal but failed.

Ibrahim Shah was succeeded by his son **Mahmud Shah** in 1436. Although he was successful in conquering Chunar, he failed to capture Kalpi. He invaded Delhi but was defeated by Bahlol Lodi. When he died in 1475, he was succeeded by his son **Bhikhan**. He picked up a quarrel with his nobles and was murdered by them. He was succeeded by his brother Husain Shah.

**Husain Shah** was the last ruler of the Sharqi dynasty. His character is both perplexing and disappointing. He was a man of ideas. He had both opportunities and resources for the realisation of his ideas. He was ever on the point of realising some great scheme of aggrandisement and ever missing his opportunity through carelessness, folly and perhaps physical cowardice. Husain Shah continued fighting against Delhi throughout his life. To begin with, he made peace with Bahlol Lodi. However, the hostility started once again between Delhi and Jaunpur. Husain Shah was defeated by Bahlol Lodi and forced to take shelter in Bihar. Jaunpur was annexed to Delhi. Bahlol placed his son Barbak Shah on the throne of Jaunpur. From his retreat in Bihar, Husain Shah continued to give trouble to the rulers of Delhi. It was in the time of Sikandar Lodi that Jaunpur was permanently annexed to the Sultanate of Delhi. Husain Shah died in 1500 A.D. and with his death the Sharqi dynasty came to an end.

The greatest and most enduring achievement of the Sharqi dynasty was architecture. In this respect, the Sharqis "stand supreme in the period before the Mughal Empire." The Atala Masjid which was completed in 1408, has been described in these words by Lane-Poole: "Its characteristic feature, a lofty inner gateway of simple grandeur, recalling the propylon of Egyptian temples, supplied the place of a minaret, and concealed from the quadrangle the too dominating outline of the great dome which covered the house of prayer. The graceful two-storeyed colonnades, five aisles deep, round the spacious quadrangle, broken by minor domes and gateways, the fine ashlar masonry of its plain buttressed exterior, the exquisite and rich, yet never intricate, floral ornament surrounding its doors and



prayer-niche, its geometrical trellis-screens and panelled ceilings, are typical of a pure style of Saracenic art, with scarcely a trace of Indian influence. Even in such a land of precious stones of architecture, the Atala Masjid remains a gem of the first water."

## Malwa

The history of Malwa is undoubtedly connected with that of Gujarat, Khandesh, Mewar and the Deccan. It was successively ruled by two Muslim dynasties. The Ghuri dynasty ruled from 1401 to 1436 A.D. and the Khalji dynasty from 1436 to 1531 A.D. when it was absorbed into Gujarat. Its capital was Dhar until it was shifted to Mandu by Hushang. Mandu was built at a commanding eminence. It had a wall covering an area of 25 miles. It was famous for its Jama Masjid, Hindola Mahal, Jahaz Mahal, tomb of Hushang and palaces of Baz Bahadur and Rupmati.

Malwa was annexed by Ala-ud-Din Khalji in 1305 A.D. and it continued to be ruled by Muslim chiefs under the authority of Delhi until it became independent. **Dilawar Khan Ghuri** had been appointed Governor of Malwa probably in the time of Firuz Tughluq. He made himself practically independent in 1401 although he did not formally give up his allegiance to Delhi and also did not assume the style of royalty.

In 1406, Dilawar Khan was succeeded by his son Alp Khan who took up the title of **Hushang Shah**. The new ruler possessed a restless spirit. He took pleasure in enterprises and wars. In 1422, he left his capital for Orissa in the guise of a merchant and made a surprise attack on the Raja of that state. He agreed to withdraw after getting 75 elephants. On the way, he captured Kherla and took away its Raja as a prisoner. He fought against the rulers of Delhi, Jaunpur and Gujarat. He had also to fight against Ahmad Shah, the Bahmani ruler, as the Raja of Kherla was a vassal of the Bahmani ruler. Most of his campaigns resulted in defeats and disaster for him.

When Hushang Shah died in July 1435, he was succeeded by his son Ghazni Khan and the latter took up the title of **Muhammad Shah**. The new ruler ignored completely the affairs of the state and consequently the throne was captured in May 1436 by his minister Mahmud Khan. Thus a new Khalji dynasty came into existence.

**Sultan Mahmud Khalji** was the founder of the Khalji dynasty in Malwa. He was a brave warrior. He fought against Ahmad Shah I of Gujarat, Muhammad Shah of Delhi, Muhammad Shah III of the Bahmani kingdom and Rana Kumbha of Mewar. In 1440 A.D., his ambition led him to march towards Delhi with a view to become the ruler of Delhi in place of Bahlol Lodi. However, he withdrew on account of the opposition of Bahlol and the dangers of troubles at home. His war with the Rana of Mewar was indecisive. Both sides claimed victory. While the Rana of Mewar built the tower of victory at Chittor, Mahmud Khalji erected a seven storeyed column at Mandu to commemorate his triumph. Mahmud Khalji was undoubtedly the ablest of the Muslim rulers of Malwa. He

extended the limits of his kingdom up to the Satpura range in the south, the frontier of Gujarat in the west, Bundelkhand in the east and Mewar and Harauti in the north. His fame spread even beyond India. His position was recognised even by the Khalifa of Egypt. He received a mission from Sultan Abu Said. He was a just and active administrator. According to Ferishta, "Sultan Mahmud was polite, brave, just and learned, and during his reign, his subjects, Mohammadans as well as Hindus, were happy and maintained a friendly intercourse with each other. Scarcely a year passed that he did not take the field, so that his tent became his home and his resting place the field of battle. His leisure hours were devoted to hearing the histories and memoirs of the courts of the different kings of the earth read." Mahmud Khalji died in 1469 at Mandu at the age of 68 after a reign of about 34 years.

About Sultan Mahmud, Dr. Upendranath Day observes : "Mahmud was the greatest of all the Sultans of Malwa. By his hard work he strengthened the kingdom of Malwa and extended it on all sides. Mahmud was polite, brave, just and learned. He valued learning above all things. His leisure hours were devoted to hearing the readings from the histories and memoirs of the courts of different kings. He had acquired intimate knowledge of human nature, a subject to which he devoted much attention.

"Mahmud was endowed with a cool temper and in spite of heavy administrative duties and responsibilities, he never lost his temper. He was kind-hearted and generous and his bounty was such that none returned empty-handed from his door. Mahmud was just and under him all people lived in safety and comfort. By his strong administration, he kept his subjects free from the hands of the oppressors. In kingship he was like Jamshid, in justice like Naushirwan and in generosity like Hatim.

"Mahmud was a good rider and a brave soldier and his whole life was practically spent in the battlefield ; there was hardly a year when Mahmud was not engaged in fighting. By his hard work and diplomacy, Mahmud not only carried Malwa to the peak of her glory but actually paved the way for peace and plenty which characterised the reign of his son and successor. If Mahmud had usurped the throne from the Ghuries, he fully justified his usurpation by his administration of the country and certainly proved the maxim that the 'crown belongs to him who deserves it', (*Medieval Malwa*, pp. 218—19.)

Mahmud Khalji was succeeded by his son **Ghiyas-ud-Din**. He had 15,000 women in his harem. He loved peace. Like a true Muslim, he was very particular about his daily prayers. There were quarrels between his two sons and he was poisoned by one of them in 1500 A.D.

Ghiyas-ud-Din was succeeded by his son **Abdul Qadir Nasir-ud-Din**. He ruled for 10 years and died in 1510. He was succeeded by **Mahmud II** (1510—1531). In order to get rid of the influence of the Muslim nobles, Mahmud II appointed Medni Rai, the powerful Rajput chief of Chanderi, as his minister. Medni Rai appointed

Hindus to all offices of trust and responsibility. This was too much for the Muslim nobles and they were able to remove Medni Rai with the help of Sultan Muza'ffar Khah II of Gujarat. However, Medni Rai was able to defeat Mahmud II with the help of Rana Sanga of Chittor. Mahmud II was captured by the Rajputs but was restored to his kingdom by them. Mahmud II invaded the territories of Rattan Singh, successor of Rana Sanga. The result was that Rattan Singh also invaded Malwa. Mahmud II also gave shelter to Chand Khan, the younger brother of the ruler of Gujarat and a rival to the throne of Gujarat. The result was that Bahadur Shah of Gujarat captured Mandu in 1531 and thereby ended the independence of Malwa.<sup>1</sup> After some time, it was occupied by Humayun. In about 1535, Mallu Khan became independent in Malwa and took up the title of Kadar Shah. However, he was deposed in 1542 by Sher Shah. Malwa was finally conquered by the Mughals from Baz Bahadur in 1561-62 A.D.

### Gujarat

Gujarat was a rich province and its richness was advertised by the famous loot of Somnath by Mahmud Ghazni in 1125 A.D. It was annexed to the Sultanate of Delhi in 1297 in the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khalji. After that the province was held by Muslim Governors who were subordinate to the rulers of Delhi. Zafar Khan, who was the son of Rajput convert, was appointed Governor of Gujarat in 1391 by Muhammad Shah, the youngest son of Firuz Tughluq. In 1401, he formally assumed independence. His son Tatar Khan conspired against his father and threw him into prison and declared himself king under the title of Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad Shah. He even marched towards Delhi but was put to death by his uncle Shams Khan.

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1. About Mahmud II, Dr. Upendranath Day says: "Mahmud was personally brave and courageous and in all the battles that were fought he distinguished himself by the display of his personal valour. All the contemporary and later historians are unanimous in their appreciation of Mahmud's courage. But his courage often led him to foolhardiness. He was also extremely self-willed but he lacked the capacity of understanding which is absolutely essential to successfully conclude any undertaking. He was completely devoid of the qualities of a monarch. He allowed himself time and again to be used as a puppet by ambitious amirs. The murder of Rai Shiv Das who was his *wasir* and had occupied that post in the reign of his father, in the very beginning of his reign exposed his weakness to the amirs. The other amirs took advantage of this and used him against their enemies and rivals. Instead of taking a bold and strong attitude, Mahmud was always conniving with the amirs for the murder of those who started dominating over him, a method which soon destroyed the confidence of the amirs in their Sultan. But the worst aspect of Mahmud's character is revealed in his dealings with Medni Rai, when he allowed himself to be made a party for the assassination of Medni Rai, who had served him with loyalty and devotion. As a monarch, if he did not approve of his actions, he could have asserted himself by issuing his own orders, but he seems to have cared more for his 'shikar' and his 'baran' and hardly knew anything about the problems of his kingdom. His act of leaving Medni and going to Gujarat was most unbecoming of a monarch, which ultimately led to massacre in the fort of Mandu, which had enjoyed continued prosperity for more than a century. No wonder, he earned with him to his grave, the glory and grandeur of Malwa, and left the country at the verge of death when it lasted for about thirty years from which it was released by its final absorption into the Mughal Empire." (*Medieval Malwa*, pp. 309-10.)



The result was that Zafar Khan was once again able to recover the throne and he took up the title of **Sultan Muzaffar Shah**. He fought a successful war against Hushang Shah, the ruler of Malwa. He was also able to capture Dhar. He died in June 1411.

Muzaffar Shah was succeeded by his grandson named **Ahmad Shah** who ruled from 1411 to 1441. He was a brave and warlike ruler and he spent the whole of his life in fighting and conquering. He has rightly been called the real founder of the independence of Gujarat. In 1414 he marched against the Hindus of Girnar, defeated Rai Mandalik and captured the fort of Junagarh. In 1415, he destroyed the temple of Sidhpur. In 1416, he marched against Dhar. In 1421, he marched against Malwa and besieged it. Hushang was defeated. Ahmad Shah attacked Rao Punja of Idar who had carried on treasonable correspondence with Hushang. The Rao fled but he was overtaken and beheaded. In 1437, Ahmad Shah besieged Mandu and defeated Mahmud Shah Khalji.

In 1411, Ahmad Shah built the city of Ahmadabad on the left bank of the Sabarmati river near the old town of Asawal. Many beautiful buildings were constructed there. He spent a lot of time in improving the civil administration of his dominion. His only defect was that he was intolerant in matters of religion. He waged relentless wars against the Hindus. Their temples were destroyed and their leaders were forced to become Muslims.

When Ahmad Shah died in August 1442, he was succeeded by his eldest son, **Muhammad Shah**. He ruled up to 1451. He was succeeded by **Qutb-ud-Din Ahmad** and **Daud**. Daud annoyed the nobles and was deposed by them. The nobles placed on the throne Abul Fateh Khan, a grandson of Ahmed Shah. The new king was known as **Mahmud Begarha** and he ruled from 1458 to 1511. The author of *Mirat-i-Sikandari* writes thus about Mahmud: "Notwithstanding his high dignity and royalty, he had an enormous appetite. The full daily allowance of food for the Sultan was one **man** of Gujarat weight. In eating this he put aside five **sirs** of boiled rice, and before going to sleep he used to make it up into a pasty and place one half of it on the right-hand side of his couch and the other half on the left, so that on whichever side he awoke he might find something to eat, and might then go to sleep again. In the morning, after saying his prayers, he took a cup full of honey and a cup of butter with a hundred or a hundred and fifty golden plantains. He often used to say, "If God had not raised Mahmud to the throne of Gujarat, who would have satisfied his hunger?"

Mahmud Begarha ruled the country for about 53 years without the influence of any minister or harem. He was a brave warrior and he succeeded in all his campaigns. He saved Nizam Shah Bahmani from aggression on the part of Mahmud Shah Khalji of Malwa. He defeated the Sumra and Sodha chiefs of Cutch. He suppressed the pirates of Jagat (Dwarka). Bhima, chief of Dwarka, was taken prisoner and was sent to Ahmadabad. There he was hacked to pieces and the fragments of his dead body were hung over the city gates as a fitting punishment for his improper conduct towards the Mulla of



Samarkand whose wives and property had been captured by the pirates. He conquered the forts of Junagarh and Champanir. Champanir was named as Muhammadabad. As a result of his conquests, the kingdom of Gujarat extended from the frontiers of Mandu to the frontiers of Sind by Junagarh ; to the Shiwalik Parbat by Jalor and Nagaur ; to Nasik Trimbak by Baglana ; from Burhanpur to Berar and Malkapur of the Deccan ; to Karkun and river Narbada on the side of Burhanpur ; on the side of Idar as far as Chittor and Kumbalgarh and on the side of the sea as the bounds of Chaul.

Mahmud Begarha joined the Sultan of Turkey to turn out the Portuguese from the Indian waters. The Portuguese were threatening to monopolise the spice trade which formerly was in the hands of the Muslim traders. They were also trying to control the important sea-ports of Western India like Cambay and Chaul. The Egyptian fleet under the command of Amir Hussain, Governor of Jedda and the Indian contingent under the command of Malik Ayaz, defeated a Portuguese squadron commanded by Dom Lourenco near Chaul, south of Bombay, in 1508. The Christians were defeated. Dom Lourenco, son of De Almeida, was killed in the fight which lasted for two days. His ship was surrounded on every side. Although his leg was broken by a cannon-ball at the very beginning of the fighting, he continued to give orders. However, another cannon ball struck him in the breast and Dom Lourenco died "without knowing what the word surrender meant." The Portuguese inflicted a crushing defeat on the combined Muslim fleet near Diu in February 1509. In 1510, Mahmud Begarha surrendered Diu to Albuquerque. A Portuguese factory appeared in the Island in 1513.

The author of *Mirat-i-Sikandari* gives the following estimate of Mahmud Begarha : "He added glory and lustre to the kingdom of Gujarat, and was the best of all the Gujarat kings, including all who preceded, and all who succeeded him ; and whether for abounding justice and generosity, for success in religious war and for the diffusion of the laws of Islam and of Mussalmans ; for soundness of judgment, alike in boyhood, in manhood, and in old age ; for power, for valour, and victory—he was a pattern of excellence."

Muhammad Begarha was succeeded by his son **Muzaffar II**. He waged successful wars against the Rajputs. He also restored Mahmud Shah Khalji of Malwa to his throne. He died in April, 1526, after a rule of about 15 years. He was succeeded by Sikandar, Nasir Khan, Mahmud II and Bahadur Shah. The latter ruled from 1527 to 1537. **Bahadur Shah** was a brave and war-like prince. He has won undying fame through his gallantry and chivalry. The Sultan twice invaded the Deccan to rescue the rulers of Khandesh and Berar from the persecutions of Burhan Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar. When the Rana of Chittor complained of Mahmud Khalji of Malwa, Bahadur Shah laid siege to Mandu and captured it in 1531. He also conquered Virangam, Mandal, Raisin, Bhilsa and Chanderi. He stormed the fortress

of Chittor in 1534. However, he annoyed Humayun, the Mughal Emperor, by giving shelter to a political refugee. When Bahadur refused to hand over the refugee, Humayun attacked Gujarat and conquered it. However, when Humayun was forced to leave Gujarat for Bengal, Bahadur Shah was able to recover the possession of Gujarat.

Bahadur Shah had also to fight against the Portuguese. When Bahadur Shah tried to turn out the Portuguese from Diu, he met with stiff resistance. Bahadur Shah wrote letters to the princes of the Deccan requesting them to help him in his fight against the Portuguese. However, those letters were intercepted by the Portuguese and they decided to take his life. Bahadur Shah was induced to pay a visit to Nuno da Cunha, the Portuguese Governor. This he did in spite of warnings to the contrary. A spear was thrust into his breast and he fell down into the sea and was drowned.

After the death of Bahadur Shah, there was anarchy in Gujarat. There were many weak kings. In 1572, Gujarat was annexed by Akbar.

### Mewar

Mewar had the credit of producing brave generals, heroic leaders, prudent rulers and brilliant poets. The Rajputs established their power in Mewar in the 7th century A.D. Ala-ud-Din Khalji besieged and captured Chittor. However, Chittor was recovered by **Hamir** or his son. Hamir died in 1364 "leaving a name still honoured in Mewar as one of the wisest and most gallant of her princes and bequeathing well-established and extensive power" to his son, **Kshetra Simha**. Kshetra Simha was succeeded by his son **Lakha** in about 1382. When Lakha died in about 1418, he was succeeded by his son Mokala. The latter was, however, killed in about 1413. The next Rana of Mewar was **Kumbha**. He was the most famous ruler of Mewar. According to Tod, "All that was wanting to augment her (Mewar's) resources against the storms which were collecting on the brows of Caucasus and the shores of Oxus, and were destined to burst on the head of his grandson, Sangha, was effected by Kumbha; who with Hamir's energy, taste for arts, and a genius comprehensive as either or more fortunate, succeeded in all his undertakings, and once more raised the 'crimson banner' of Mewar upon the banks of the Ghaggar, the scene of Samarsi's defeat." Kumbha fought against the rulers of Malwa and Gujarat. It is true that he was not successful in all his enterprises, but he was able to keep his neighbours in check. Kumbha was responsible for the construction of 32 out of 48 fortresses built for the defence of Mewar. He was also responsible for the construction of Kumbhagarh "second to none in strategical importance or historical renown." Kumbha is also famous for his Javastambha or Kirtistambha or Tower of Fame. He was not only a great builder but also a great poet, a man of letters and a musician. He was killed by his son in about 1469.

Kumbha was succeeded by **Rayamalla**, his younger brother. There was a quarrel for succession among his sons and ultimately Rana Sanga came to the throne in about 1509 A.D. **Rana Sanga** was the person who fought against Babur in the battle of Kanwaha in 1527 and was defeated. He was otherwise a formidable enemy.

### Khandesh

The province of Khandesh lay in the valley of the Tapti river and it was bounded in the north by the Vindhya, in the South by the Deccan Plateau, in the west by Gujarat and in the east by Berar. Khandesh was a part of the empire of Muhammad Tughluq. It continued to be so during the reign of Firuz. In 1370, **Malik Raja Faruqi** was put in charge of Khandesh. After the death of Firuz, there was confusion and Malik Raja Faruqi declared himself independent as was done by Dilawar Khan of Malwa. Malik Raja Faruqi was defeated by Muzaffar Shah of Gujarat on many occasions. He was a man of peaceful habits and he followed a policy of religious toleration towards the Hindus. He encouraged both agriculture and industries.

When Malik Raja died in 1399, he was succeeded by his son **Malik Nasir**. The new ruler was responsible for the conquest of the fortress of Asirgarh from a Hindu chief. This was done by means of treachery. Malik Nasir was defeated by Ahmad Shah, the ruler of Gujarat and was compelled to swear fealty to him. He also fought against his son-in-law Ala-ud-Din Ahmad of the Bahmani dynasty but was defeated.

Malik Nasir died in the year 1437-38. He was succeeded by **Adil Khan I** who ruled from 1438 to 1441 and **Mubarak Khan I** who ruled from 1441 to 1457. Then came **Adil Khan II** who ruled from 1457 to 1503. The new king was an able and vigorous ruler and he tried his best to bring about order in the administration. The country became prosperous during his reign. Rushbrook-Williams points out that Khandesh is a good example of the manner in which the amenities of life can flourish under conditions which prohibit the exercise of the art of politics.

Adil Khan II was succeeded by his brother **Daud** who ruled for about 7 years from 1501 to 1508. Daud was succeeded by his son **Ghazni Khan** but he was poisoned within 10 days of his accession. There was a lot of confusion. There were rival claimants to the throne but ultimately **Adil Khan III** succeeded. There was nothing important in his reign and he died in August 1520. He was succeeded by weak rulers who could not check encroachments of foreign powers on their dominions. Akbar annexed Khandesh to his empire in January 1601.

### Orissa

The kingdom of Orissa extended from the mouth of the Ganga to that of the Godavari. It was consolidated into a powerful kingdom by **Anantavarman Choda Ganga** who ruled for more than 70 years from about 1076 to 1148 A.D. Ganga was a patron of



religion and Sanskrit and Telugu literature. The Jagannath temple at Puri is an example of "the artistic vigour and prosperity of Orissa during his reign." His successors also did not allow the Muslim invasions to succeed. **Narasimha I** who ruled from 1238 to 1264 was one of the successors of Anantavarman Choda Ganga and he probably completed the construction of the Jagannath temple at Puri. He was also responsible for the construction of the temple of the Sun-God at Konarak in the Puri district.

In 1434-35, a new dynasty began to rule in Orissa and it was founded by **Kapilendra**. The founder had a lot of energy and ability. He was able to restore the prestige of the kingdom of Orissa. The powerful rebels were suppressed. **Kapilendra** fought successfully against the Bahmanis of Bidar and the rulers of Vijayanagar. His kingdom extended from the Ganges to the Kaveri. He took possession of Udayagiri, seat of a Vijayanagar viceroyalty, and Conjeevaram.

**Purushottama** ruled from 1470 to 1497. There were disorders during his reign. The result was that **Narasimha** captured the country to the south of the Krishna. The Bahmanis captured the Godavari-Krishna Doab. However, **Purushottama** was able to re-conquer the Doab. He was also able to re-conquer the Andhra country as far as the Guntur district. Probably, he was not successful in getting back the Tamil districts of the empire of **Kapilendra**.

**Purushottama** was succeeded by his son **Prataparudra** who ruled from 1497 to 1540. On account of the aggressions of **Krishnadeva Raya** of Vijayanagar and **Qutb Shahi** kingdom of Golkunda, **Prataparudra** was not able to maintain his empire. He was forced to give away to Vijayanagar that portion of his kingdom which lay to the south of the Godavari.

It is contended that one of the reasons responsible for the fall of Orissa was the influence of Vaishnavism preached by Chaitanya. Orissa lost her position in the beginning of the 16th century. In 1541-52, the Bhoi dynasty was established by **Govinda**, who was formerly a minister of **Prataparudra**. **Govinda**, his son and two grandsons ruled for about 18 years. In about 1559, **Mukunda Harichandana** set up a new dynasty. He died in 1568 and in the same year Orissa was annexed.

### Bengal

Bengal was conquered and brought under the Sultanate of Delhi by **Ikhtiyar-ud-Din Muhammad-bin-Baktiyar Khalji** during the last decade of the 12th century A.D. However, his successors tried to assert their independence. They were encouraged to do so by the fact that Bengal was far away from Delhi and was also very rich. **Sultan Balban** was able to re-establish his suzerainty over Bengal after putting down the rebellion. He also appointed his son **Bughra Khan** as the Governor of Bengal. However, **Bughra Khan** declared himself independent after some time.

**Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq** tried to solve the problem of Bengal by dividing it into three independent administrative divisions with their



capitals and Lakhnauti. Satgaon and Sonargaon. After coming to the throne, Muhammad bin Tughluq appointed Qadr Khan incharge of Lakhnauti, Izz ud-Din Azam-ul-Mulk that of Satgaon and Ghivas ud Din Bahadur Shah to that of Sonargaon. However, in spite of partition, the situation did not improve. Ghivas-ud-Din Bahadur revolted and issued coins both from Sonargaon and Ghivaspur. However, he was defeated and killed. Bahram Khan became the sole Governor at Sonargaon. When he died in 1336, his armour-bearer named Fakhr-ud-Din declared himself ruler of Sonargaon and took up the title of Fakhr-ud-Din Mubarak Shah. Ala-ud-Din Ali Shah declared himself independent in north Bengal and shifted his capital from Lakhnauti to Pandua. He ruled for about 10 years and was succeeded by Ikhtiyar-ud-Din Ghazi Shah.

About the year 1345, **Haji Ilyas** made himself an independent ruler of the whole of the province of Bengal. He annexed the eastern kingdom of Sonargaon in 1352. He got tributes from the kingdoms of Orissa and Tirhut and proceeded as far as Banaras. As his activities threatened the Delhi Sultanate, Firuz Tughluq tried to subdue him but failed. Haji Ilyas died in 1357. There was peace and prosperity during his reign. This is attested by the inauguration of a national and typical coinage and the growth of a taste for the arts of peace, especially architecture.

Haji Ilyas was succeeded by **Sikandar Shah**. He ruled from 1357 to 1393. During his reign, Firuz Tughluq made another attempt to recover Bengal, but he failed. A magnificent mosque was built at Adina during his reign. We have also got a large number of coins of various designs of his reign.

Sikandar Shah was succeeded by **Ghiyas-ud-Din Azam**. He had a profound regard for law. He received an embassy from China in 1403 and himself sent one to China in 1409. He died in 1410 after a reign of 17 years.

Ghivas-ud-Din Azam was succeeded by his son **Saif-ud-Din Hamza Shah**. At this time, Raja Ganesh, a Brahman Zamindar, came into prominence and Hamza Shah ruled for one year and a few months as a nominal king. The view of the Muslim historians is that Ganesh ruled Bengal as an independent king and abdicated in favour of his son Jadu who later on became a Muslim and took up the title of Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad Shah. As no coin of Raja Ganesh has been found, it is suggested that he never became a sovereign and contented himself to rule the country in the name of some descendants of Ilyas Shah. Dr. Bhattasali is of the view that Raja Ganesh is the same person as Danujamardana Deva whose name has been found on coins. However, this identification is not accepted by many writers. It appears that the rule of the dynasty of Raja Ganesh did not last long. Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad Shah died in 1431 and he was succeeded by his son Shams-ud-Din Ahmad who reigned from 1431 to 1442. The new ruler was extremely unpopular on account of his tyranny and no wonder he fell a victim to a conspiracy organised against him. There was some confusion for some

time and ultimately Nasir ud-Din, a grandson of Haji Ilyas, was put on the throne. He took up the title of **Nasir-ud-Din Abul Muzaffar Mahmud Shah**.

The new ruler ruled for about 17 years. He built a few buildings at Gaur and a mosque at Satgaon. Rukn-ud-Din Barbak Shah succeeded to the throne after the death of his father Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud Shah. He kept a very large number of Abyssinian slaves. He "was a sagacious and law-abiding sovereign". He died in 1474 A.D.

He was succeeded by his son **Shams-ud-Din Yusuf Shah**. He was a virtuous, learned and pious ruler. He ruled from 1474 to 1481. Sylhet was conquered by the Muslims during his reign. He was succeeded by **Sikandar II**. As he was found to be of defective intellect, he was deposed and **Jalal-ud Din Fateh Shah**, a son of Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud, was put on the throne. The new ruler realised the danger of the increase in the power of the Abyssinians and tried to check the same. However, he himself was murdered in 1486. He was succeeded by **Barbak Shah**, Sultan Shahzada but the latter was murdered within a few months by Indil Khan. After some hesitation Indil Khan became the ruler of Bengal and took up the title of Saif-ud-Din Firuz. He was an able administrator and commander. He gave a lot in charity. He died in 1489. He was succeeded by Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud Shah II. However, he was ousted in 1490 by Sidi Badr who took up the title of Shams-ud-Din Abu Nasir Muzaffar Shah. He ruled for a little more than three years. As he was a tyrant, there was a lot of discontentment. He was besieged in Gaur for four months in course of which he died. He was succeeded by Ala-ud-Din Husain Shah.

Husain Shah ruled from 1493 to 1518. He was an enlightened king. He was the most popular ruler of Bengal. He suppressed the power of the palace guards who had become too powerful. He turned out the Abyssinians from Bengal as their presence had become a menace. He welcomed Husain Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur in Bengal when he was driven from his kingdom by Sikandar Lodi. He also tried to recover the lost territorial possessions of Bengal. He extended the limits of his territory up to the borders of Orissa in the South. He recovered Magadha from the control of the Sharqis of Jaunpur. He invaded Ahom kingdom of Assam. In 1489, he captured Kamatapur. He also captured Assam. He built a large number of mosques and alms houses in different parts of his territory. According to Dr. V. A. Smith, "His name is still familiar throughout Bengal and no insurrection or rebellion occurred during his reign of 24 years. He died at Gaur (Lakhnauti) having enjoyed a peaceable and happy reign, beloved by his subjects and respected by his neighbours."

Husain Shah was succeeded by his son Nasib Khan who took up the title of **Nasir-ud-Din Nusrat Shah**. He was a prince of gentle disposition and strong natural affections. He not only refrained from slaying, mutilating or imprisoning his brothers but also doubled the provision which his father had made for them. He was a patron of art, literature and architecture. He was responsible for the cons-

truction of Bara Sona Masjid and Kadam Rasul at Gaur. He invaded Tihhat, slew its king and put his own relatives in charge of its administration.

Nusrat Shah was succeeded by his son **Ala-ud-Din Firuz Shah**. He ruled for about three months and was killed by his uncle, **Ghiyas ud-Din Mahmud Shah** who was the last king of the dynasty. He was turned out from Bengal by Sher Khan.

Dr. V. A. Smith points out that some of the Muslim kings were not indifferent to the merits of Hindu literature. A Bengali version of the Mahabharat was prepared under the orders of Nusrat Shah. There are frequent references in old Bengali literature to Emperor Husam Shah and he was held in high esteem and trust by the Hindus. It is pointed out that "the patronage and favour of the Muhammadan emperors and chiefs gave the first start towards the recognition of Bengali in the courts of the Hindu Rajas who, under the guidance of their Brahman teachers, were more inclined to encourage Sanskrit."

Sir Wolseley Haig points out that "Bengal, whether as a province of Delhi or as an independent kingdom, was not a homogeneous Muslim state. Great Hindu landholders held estates which were, in fact principalities, and their allegiance to a Muslim ruler, like his to a Sultan of Delhi, depended on the ruler's personality. The general attitude of the rulers of Bengal to their Hindu subjects was tolerant but it is evident, from the numerical superiority in Eastern Bengal of Muslims who are certainly not the descendants of dominant invaders, that from time to time waves of proselytism swept over the country."

### **Kashmir**

Kashmir enjoyed immunity for long from Muslim conquest. It continued to be under its Hindu rulers up to 1339.

It was in the year 1315 that Shah Mirza, a Muslim adventurer from Swat, entered the service of the Hindu ruler of Kashmir. Shah Mirza captured the throne of Kashmir in the year 1339 and took up the title of **Shams-ud-Din Shah**. He was a wise and generous king. He died in 1349. His four sons ruled Kashmir for about 46 years.

**Sikandar** ascended the throne in 1394 after the death of his father Qutb-ud-Din. He ruled from 1394 to 1416. It was during his reign that Timur invaded India but fortunately Kashmir was saved. Envoys were exchanged between Timur and Sikandar but they never met each other. Sikandar was generous towards the Muslims and he welcomed Muslim scholars from Persia, Arabia and Mesopotamia. He was responsible for the persecution of the Hindus. They were either converted to Islam or turned out from Kashmir. It is stated that only 11 families of the Brahmans were left in Kashmir. He destroyed many temples and the most important of them was the Martand temple at Matian. This giant work of art in its present half-burnt and ruined condition proves the religious zeal

of Sikandar. He got the title of Sikandar, the **But-Shikan** or idol-breaker.

Sikandar was succeeded by his son Ali Shah who ruled for a few years when he was deposed by his brother Shah Khan who took up the title of **Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70)**. He was the greatest ruler of Kashmir. He enforced the system of responsibility of the village communities for local crimes. The result was that the number of thefts and highway robberies fell considerably. He regulated the prices of commodities. He lightened the burden of taxation on the people. He stabilized the currency which had been debased during the reigns of his predecessors. He was responsible for a large number of public works. He was a man of liberal ideas. He showed toleration towards the followers of other faiths. He called back the Brahmans who had left Kashmir during the reign of his father. He abolished Jizya and guaranteed perfect religious freedom to all. He had a good knowledge of Persian, Hindi and Tibetan. He patronised literature, painting and music. The Mahabharat and the Rajatarangini were translated from Sanskrit into Persian. Several Arabic and Persian books were translated into Hindi. For all these reasons, Zain-ul-Abidin has been described a "**the Akbar of Kashmir**." He died in November or December 1470 and was succeeded by his son Haidar Shah.

It is pointed out that Zain Shah won the throne with the help of the Ghakhars. He had lived with them, fought with them and he knew them to be a brave, trustworthy and warlike community. No wonder, Zain Shah maintained very intimate relations with the Ghakhars. He took many of them in his administration. The Ghakhars also helped Zain Shah in carrying out his policy of peace within and placidity without.

It is stated that after the death of Zain-ul-Abidin, anarchy "ensued under the rule of nominal kings who were replaced on the throne as a mark for the machinations of the different parties who were seeking pre-eminence for purposes of self-aggrandisement and plunder." In 1540, Mirza Haider, a relative of Humayun, conquered Kashmir and although he governed theoretically on behalf of Humayun, he was practically an independent ruler. He was, however, overthrown by the Kashmir nobles. Ultimately, Kashmir was conquered and annexed to the empire of Akbar in 1586.

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## CHAPTER XIII

# The Bahmani Kingdom

The Bahmani kingdom of the Deccan was the most powerful of all the independent Muslim kingdoms that arose on account of the disintegration of the Delhi Sultanate. It was during the reign of Muhammad Tughluq that the Amirs of the Deccan called the *Amiran-i-Sadah*<sup>1</sup> revolted against the Emperor, captured the fort of Daulatabad and declared Ismail Mukh as the King of the Deccan under the title of Nasir-ud-Din Shah. However, Ismail Mukh was an old man and loved ease and consequently he voluntarily resigned in favour of Hasan, entitled Zafar Khan, who was declared king by the nobles on 3rd August, 1347 under the title of Abul Muzaffar Ala-ud-Din Bahman Shah.

### Its Origin

The origin of the Bahmani kingdom as given by Ferishta is not accepted by modern historians. The view given by Ferishta is that Hasan was employed in the service of Gangu, a Brahman astrologer of Delhi who enjoyed the confidence of Muhammad Tughluq. One day while Hasan was ploughing the lands of Gangu, he found in a furrow a copper vessel full of gold coins. Hasan took to Gangu all that he had found and the latter was so pleased with his honesty that he recommended Hasan to Muhammad Tughluq. Muhammad Tughluq conferred upon Gangu the command of 100 horses. Gangu named his kingdom after the name of his master.

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1. It is pointed out that most of these officers were of noble descent or belonged to the upper middle class and were in direct and close touch with the people of the *Sadis* or the hundred over whom they held sway. They were not only revenue collectors but also military commanders in direct charge of the local levies. While the *Walis* and *Shiqdars* were in a way hidden from the public view, these Amirs constituted, for all intents and purposes, the government as the people knew it. They had a kind of innate pride of office. They began to smart with indignity when Muhammad Tughluq embarked upon the policy of suppressing them as a punishment for the rebellions which finally broke up his empire but for which most of them were not directly responsible.

While rejecting the view of Ferishta, it is pointed out that in **Burhan-i Maasir** Hasan traces his pedigree from Bahman-bin-Isafandiyar and does not make any mention of Gangu, the Brahman astrologer of Delhi. The view of Ferishta is also contradicted by Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad, author of *Tabqat-i-Akbari*, Ahmad Amin Razi, author of *Haft Iqlim* and Haji-ud-Dabir, author of *Arabic History of Gujarat*. The view of Ferishta is also contradicted by the evidence of inscriptions and coins.

### **Ala-ud-Din-Hasan (1347-58)**

After his accession, Ala-ud-Din Hasan selected Gulbarga as his capital and gave it the name of Ahsanabad. As the Hindu rulers of the South refused to submit to his authority, he embarked upon a career of conquests. The countries of the infidels were over-run and one province after another was conquered. Sikandar Khan reduced Bidar and Malkhed. The anxiety of Hasan was gone after the death of Muhammad Tughluq as Firuz Tughluq had no inclination to reconquer the territories in the Deccan. Hasan became more active and he won victories over many Hindu and Muslim princes who were compelled to pay tribute. Goa, Dabhol, Kolapur and Telingana were all conquered. Hasan died in February 1358. He left a dominion extending from the Wainganga river in the north to the Krishna river in the south and from Daulatabad in the west to Bhongir in the east. He divided his dominion into four Tarafs or provinces namely Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar. Each province was put under the charge of a governor who was required to maintain an army. According to the author of **Burhan-i-Maasir**, "Sultan Ala-ud-Din Hasan Shah was a just king who cherished his people and practised piety. During his reign his subjects and army used to pass their time in perfect ease and contentment and he did much towards propagating the true faith."

About the founder of the Bahmani kingdom, Prof. Sherwani says : "There is not a single campaign either against the partisans of the Tughluq faction or against the Hindu Rajas and Muqaddams in which he showed the slightest hint of cruelty, and it invariably happened that after the campaign was over the king or his representatives made a gift of the territory back to the erstwhile enemy to be held as a jagir. This was the reason why such powerful rulers as the Raya of Warangal accepted the king's hegemony without any blood being shed, and began to be regarded as honoured friends and allies of the new state. As Isami says, Ala-ud-Din had all the three qualities of a good sovereign ; he always gave relief to the oppressed, he was always kind to the poor and took pains to obey the Divine commandments.

"His treatment of his own subordinates who chose to be rebellious or conspired against him, is a different story. To them he was very stern and it was this which kept his former equals and comrades under strict discipline. Thus in spite of Sikandar's recommendation that the life of the rebel Qir Khan might be spared, he made him an example for all others, and had him beheaded. The

same fate awaited his predecessor in title, Shams-ud-Din, formerly Sultan Nasir-ud Din Ismail, who was accused of complicity in a conspiracy against the king. On the renunciation of his kingship Ismail had been an **amir-ul-umara** and the chief noble of the kingdom. He was given a place on the left of the king's person at the royal darbar and it was a matter of etiquette that when he entered the hall, the king paced a few steps forward to receive him. When Malik Saif-ud-Din Ghorī was appointed Prime Minister, he was given precedence over Ismail for as the king explained, it had been the custom among the rulers of old that the chief minister took precedence over the **amir-ul-umara**. This, of course, silenced Ismail, but it seems that he was instigated by others to plot against the king. The king got an intimation of what was going on, and asked Ismail in open court to which he had invited some of the most eminent men of the city, whether he had been plotting against his person, to which he swore that it was a lie and that he was innocent of the charge. The king now addressed the audience and promised full pardon for all those who would tell the truth, at which a number of the courtiers asserted that the charge of the conspiracy was absolutely correct to their personal knowledge. The king thereupon struck Ismail with his own sword and killed him immediately. This was the first execution of its kind in open court in the Deccan, and however just it might have been, there is no doubt that it set a precedent for other Bahmani sovereigns of a more unscrupulous nature to do away with some of the best of their ministers and subjects." (*The Bahmanis of the Deccan*, pp. 62-64).

### Muhammad Shah I (1358-75)

Ala-ud-Din Hasan was succeeded by his elder son, Muhammad Shah I. The latter organised the different branches of his government like the ministry, household troops and provincial administration. He was busy all his life in fighting against the rulers of Warangal and Vijayanagar. Although the Hindus fought with courage and determination, they were defeated. Their territory was plundered. Temples were razed to the ground. The immediate cause of a war with Vijayanagar was that a messenger who had been sent to demand money from the ruler of Vijayanagar was insulted. The ruler of Vijayanagar himself marched into the territory of the Bahmani kingdom and laid waste the country lying between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra. The fort of Mudgal was captured and the Muslim garrison was put to the sword. Muhammad Shah took a vow that he would not stop fighting until he had taken the lives of 100,000 Hindus. He personally led the attack on Vijayanagar. The Hindus were defeated and there was a terrible carnage in which even women and children were not spared. Ultimately peace was made.

Muhammad Shah was ruthless in carrying out his domestic policy. He ordered all public distilleries to be closed and he put down lawlessness with a heavy hand. He died in 1375. It is contended that the acts of cruelty in which Muhammad Shah took delight and the disgraceful orgies and revels which was a common feature of court-life at Gulbarga, do not entitle Muhammad Shah I to the praise showered on him by Ferishta.



According to Prof. Sherwani, "Muhammad Shah was one of the greatest rulers of the Bahmani dynasty. His father had no time to put the institutions of the kingdom on a sound basis and it was left to him to make the state perfect so far as administrative institutions were concerned. By his campaigns in the East and the South he fully demonstrated to his neighbours the power of the new Sultanate and suppressed with an iron hand the only rebellion of his reign that of Bramham Khan Mazendarani. His strategical worth is to be seen in his campaign against Vijayanagar where he not only used the new fire arms to his advantage but also routed an enemy far superior to him in numbers. In his own court, he knew no distinctions and even made his father-in-law, the chief minister Malik Saif-ud-Din Ghori, stand at the foot of the throne. Shaikh Zain-ud-Din's eulogy, however, shows how a king of those days, of the calibre of Muhammad Shah I, had to bow before the force of superior character, and he could forsake evil when called upon to do so. He was always ready to listen to the superior direction of the Divines, and always counted on the prayers of Shaikh Siraj-ud-Din Junaidi whenever he set out on a campaign. When a prince, he had been taught the gentlemanly arts of archery and fencing, and although prone to drink, there is nothing known against him so far as private morality is concerned. When he died, he was at peace with Telingana, with Vijayanagar, with his subjects both Hindu and Muslim, and with his God. It is said that he treated his soldiers and the civilians, officers and subjects, with kindness and concern. He always sought the company of the learned and it was due to this that men like Shaikh-ul-Mashai, Kh Zain-ud-Din Daultabadi, Ain-ud-Din Bijapuri, Maulana Nizam-ud-Din Barani, Hakim Zahir-ud-Din Tabrizi crowded his capital and made the Deccan 'the centre of the learned and the envy of all parts of India'." (*The Bahmanis of the Deccan*, pp. 100-101.)

### **Mujahid Shah (1375-78)**

Muhammad Shah I was succeeded by his son Mujahid Shah. The Raichur Doab was the bone of contention between Vijayanagar and the Bahmani kingdom. When Mujahid Shah asked the ruler of Vijayanagar to leave the Raichur Doab, the latter replied by demanding the fortresses of Raichur and Mudgal. Mujahid marched against Vijayanagar but he failed to capture the city. A second attempt was made but that also failed. The Muslims suffered a crushing defeat and ultimately peace was concluded. Mujahid fell a victim to a conspiracy organised by **Daud Khan** who usurped the throne. However, the usurper himself was murdered in May 1378 at the instigation of Ruh Parwar Agha, the foster sister of Mujahid. She hired a slave who killed Daud Khan in the mosque when he was kneeling down to say his prayers.

### **Muhammad Shah II (1318-97)**

The next ruler was Muhammad Shah II. He was a man of peace. He spent all his time in the pursuit of literature and science. He built mosques. He set up monasteries and public schools. Many learned men came to his court from all parts of Asia. Hafiz,

the famous Persian poet, was invited and he actually started for India but had to give up the attempt on account of difficulties. The poet went on a day for which he was given a good reward. The view of Muhammad Shah was that the king was merely a trustee of the wealth of the people and any careless or unnecessary expenditure amounted to a breach of trust. In his time, a famine broke out and he employed 10,000 bullocks to bring grains from Malwa and Gujarat to meet the situation. He died in April 1397.

A reference may be made at this stage to **Saif-ud-Din Ghori** who had the privilege of serving the first five Bahmani rulers. Sir Wolsely Haig says that Muhammad Shah I was a diligent and methodical administrator, but as he was all the time occupied with war, wine and slaughter of the Hindus, he had practically no time for constructive statesmanship. The success of his administration was due to Saif-ud-Din Ghori. The same part was played by Saif-ud-Din during the reign of Muhammad Shah II. When there was a famine between 1387 and 1395, a thousand bullocks were employed to import corn from Gujarat and Malwa. However, that corn was sold at low rates to Muslims only. Likewise, free schools were established for Muslim orphans at Gulbarga, Bidar, Qandhar, Elchpur, Daulatabad, Chaul, Dhabol and other cities and towns in which children were not only taught but were housed and fed at public expense. Special allowances were given to the readers of the Quran, reciters of the Traditions and the blind. Saif-ud-Din Ghori died in 1397 A.D. at the age of 104.

### **Firuz Shah (1397-1422)**

Muhammad Shah II was succeeded by his two sons, namely **Ghiyas-ud-Din** and **Shams-ud-Din**. However, their rule lasted for a few months only. In November 1397, the throne was captured by Firuz, a grandson of Ala-ud-Din Hasan Bahmani. He took up the title of **Taj-ud-Din Firuz Shah**. The author of *Burhan-i-Maasir* says that Firuz Shah "was an impetuous and a mighty monarch and expended all his ability and energy in eradicating and in destroying tyranny and hearsay and he took much pleasure in the society of the Shaikhs, learned men and hermits." However, after a few years of rule, he got himself involved into the common vices of his time. He began to drink hard. He became passionately fond of music. He maintained a large harem which included women of several nationalities. As a Muslim could not have more than four wives, the Sultan resorted to 'Muta' marriages. It is said that about 800 women were daily admitted into his harem in this manner.

In 1389, war broke out with Vijayanagar whose ruler marched into the Raichur Doab with a view to take possession of the fort of Mudgal. Through treachery, the son of the ruler of Vijayanagar was killed. Aggrieved by the death of his son, Deva Raya made feeble resistance and ran away with his army. A large number of Hindus were slaughtered. Another war with Vijayanagar started in the year 1406. The immediate cause of this war was the desire of the ruler of Vijayanagar to obtain possession of the beautiful daughter of a farmer in Mudgal. The accounts of the beauty of the girl were

given by a Brahman who had taught her and the ruler of Vijayanagar decided to marry her. However, the girl refused the offer on the ground that it would mean her final separation from her own kith and kin whose affection she valued more than the offers of a king. The ruler of Vijayanagar marched his troops towards Mudgal in order to capture her by force. On hearing the approach of the army, the inhabitants ran away including the parents of the girl. As the girl could not be found, the troops plundered the country. This was too much for Firuz Shah. The war started between Vijayanagar and Bahmani kingdom and ultimately the ruler of Vijayanagar was defeated and he had to agree to give his own daughter in marriage to Firuz Shah and also pay a huge war indemnity. Firuz Shah married his own son Hassan Khan to the daughter of the farmer who was the cause of the whole trouble.

In 1420, there was another war between Vijayanagar and the Bahmani kingdom and it ended in the defeat of the latter. Mir Fazlullah, Commander-in Chief of the Muslim forces, was killed in the battle-field. The Sultan himself ran away in utter confusion. The Vijayanagar troops occupied the southern and eastern districts of the Bahmani kingdom. This defeat so much influenced the mind and body of the Sultan that he left his administration in the hands of his two slaves. According to one view, Firuz Shah died a natural death. The other view is that he was forced to abdicate in favour of his brother, Ahmad Shah in 1422.

### **Ahmad Shah (1422-36)**

Ahmad Shah ruled from 1422 to 1436. He fought against the ruler of Vijayanagar to take revenge for the invasion of the previous reign. The ruler of Vijayanagar entrenched himself in the fort. The whole country was laid waste by the Muslim troops. They put to death men, women and children to the number of 20,000 and celebrated a carnival in its memory. An attempt was made on the life of Ahmad Shah but he was saved. Ultimately, Deva Raya was forced to make peace by which he agreed to pay all arrears of tribute and send his son with 30 elephants laden with money, jewels and other articles of great value.

In 1425, the Sultan declared war upon Warangal. The Hindus were defeated and their chief was killed. The independence of Warangal was extinguished. Ahmad Shah also fought against Malwa and the neighbouring states. He also fought against Konkan. The last expedition was against Telingana. He shifted his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar. He died in 1436.

Ahmad Shah was a tyrant. He was a fanatical Muslim. He forgot the sufferings of the Hindus in his zeal for Islam. The view that "his disposition was adorned with the ornament of clemency and temperance and with the jewel of abstinence and devotion" is not correct. He loved the society of learned men. He gave seven lacs of Deccani Tankas to Shaikh Azari for his writing two verses in praise of the Sultan at Bidar.

According to Prof. Sherwani, "Ahmad was a pious and God-fearing Sultan and is even now regarded a saint by a large majority of the people of the Deccan. In his reign Muhammadabad Bidar became the rendezvous of the learned and the pious from all parts of Iran, Iraq and Arabia. He was himself a man of some erudition, having imbibed knowledge at the feet of Mir Fazl'llah Inju, and was also an adept in music and singing. He was very kind and considerate to his subjects as when he opened his purse strings for the purchase and free distribution of grains at the time of a great drought which occurred in the Deccan. We have already related how the king had an inclination towards the Sufi principles and perhaps also to the Shi'ah doctrine, and he encouraged the influx of learned men, poets, statesmen, soldiers and others from over the seas, which, to a certain extent, led to a greater cleavage between these New-comers and the older colonists. There was also a direct Hindu influence on arts, architecture and social life of the people partly owing to the policy of intermarriage which was being pursued by the rulers and no doubt by the ruled as well since the last reign." (*The Bahmanis of the Deccan*, pp. 211-212.)

#### **Ala-ud-Din II (1436-58)**

Ahmad Shah was succeeded by his son Ala-ud-Din II who ruled from 1436 to 1458. He had to suppress a rebellion headed by his brother Muhammad who was pardoned and given the government of the Raichur Doab. He remained faithful to Ala-ud-Din for the rest of his life.

He reduced to submission the Hindu chiefs of Konkan. The Raja of Sangameshwar gave his daughter in marriage to Ala-ud-Din II. This was not liked by Malika-u-Jahan the queen of Ala-ud-Din II and she asked her father, Nasir Khan, ruler of Khandesh, to interfere. However, Nasir Khan was defeated.

About the year 1442, Deva Raya, ruler of Vijayanagar, called a meeting of the chief Brahmans and nobles and discussed with them the causes of Muslim success against the Hindus. Their conclusion was that Muslim success was due to the superior strength of the Muslim cavalry and their skill in archery. The result was that Dev Raya himself employed a large number of Muslims in his service and gave them Jagirs. He also constructed a mosque for their worship. There was an attack by Deva Raya on the Bahmani kingdom. There was no decisive battle and sometimes the Hindus were successful and sometimes the Muslims. Ultimately, peace was concluded and Deva Raya agreed to pay the stipulated tribute.

Ala-ud-Din was a champion of Islam and he was very considerate towards the Muslims. We are told that Ala-ud-Din "founded Masjids, public schools and charitable institutions, among which was a hospital of perfect elegance and purity of style, which he built in his capital, Bidar, and made two beautiful villages there as a pious endowment, in order that the revenue of these villages should be solely devoted to supply medicines and drinks." Again, "To every part of his dominions, he sent censors of morals and just, judges; and though he drank wine himself, he forbade it to others



as also gambling. He put chains on the necks of idle vagabonds and made them street scavengers and labourers, that they might reform and earn their livelihood, or else quit the country. If any one, of any rank, after warning and much correction was convicted of drinking, lead was to be poured down his throat."

According to Prof. Sherwani, "Ala-ud-Din Ahmad had some fine traits in his character. His humane qualities are evident from his treatment of his brothers to all of whom he was kind and considerate. It was, of course, impossible for him to make Prince Muhammad a partner of royalty, but the fact remains that even after the unsuccessful insurrection which he had led by giving his ear to the discontented element and perhaps also to Deva Raya of Vijayanagar, he was treated kindly by the king and granted a comfortable jagir. We also see him fighting for his throne and kingdom against Mahmud Khalji of Malwa who had been invited by Sikandar Khan and when the danger is passed, pardoning the same Sikandar and his father Jalal at the instance of Mahmud Gawan.

"Ahmad began his rule well and in the beginning of his reign took an active interest in the affairs of the kingdom. He left no stone unturned to enforce the letter of the law and eradicated gambling, drinking, debauchery and crime by the appointment of learned men as police officers and judges. But it seems that after the second Vijayanagar campaign, he began to lead a life of ease and luxury and he himself began to indulge in wine which he did not give up till 855 1452. The result was that the high moral tone of his deteriorated and he began to lose all interest in affairs of state. This is amply proved by the sad story of his having ordered the massacre, firstly of the New-comers at Chakan and then of the Dakhnis on receiving a letter from Shaikh Azari, showing that he had become prone to lend his ears to any party that might seek it.

"Ahmad was well educated by his father and was eloquent to the extent that sometimes he would ascend the pulpit before Friday prayers in the Great Mosque of the capital and deliver an extempore sermon himself. It is related that one Syed Ajal, a dealer in Arab steeds, was present in the Great Mosque on one of these occasions. When during the sermon the king enumerated his own qualities of piety, justice and mercy, the horse-dealer arose and at the top of his voice said that it was all untrue, and that the king was both cruel and false, for had he not ordered the massacre of thousands of innocent men shut up in the Chakan fort? It is said that the king was so filled with remorse that he never left his palace after this event, and when he found on enquiry that the man had not been paid for the horses which had been purchased for the royal stables, he ordered every jital to be paid forthwith. In spite of his loose life, he remained energetic right up to the end, and his fortitude is shown by the fact that when he undertook the Nalgonda and Mahur campaigns, he had a malignant wound and it was partly his **non-chalance** that precipitated death a few months later." (*The Bahmanis of the Deccan*, pp. 246-48.)

**Humayun (1458-61)**

Ala-ud-Din II was succeeded by his son Humayun who ruled

from 1458 to 1461. He was so cruel that he got the title of Zalim or the tyrant. According to Ferishta, "Humayun Shah, abandoning himself to the full indulgence of his cruel propensities caused vicious elephants and wild beasts to be placed in the square, and the cauldrons of scalding oil and boiling water for torture. Looking on from a balcony, he had his brother Hasan thrown to a ferocious tiger who tore him to pieces and devoured him. Ingenious tortures were invented by the king and inflicted on young and old of both sexes. He put the women servants of his household to death for the most trivial faults; and when any of the nobility were obliged to wait upon him so great was their dread that they took a last leave of their families." He died in 1461.

According to Prof. Sherwani, "Humayun's character is one of the enigmas of the history of the Deccan. Ferishta paints him in the blackest of colours possible ascribing to him the most heinous of crimes. He gives him the sobriquet of 'the Cruel' without any reserve and tries to give evidence to prove his thesis. To quote his translator and epitomiser: "Humayun threw off all restraint and seized at will, the children of his subjects, tearing them from their parents...He would frequently stop nuptial processions in the streets, seizing the bride to enjoy her, and then send her to the bridegroom's house. He was in the habit of putting the females of his own house to death for the most trivial offence, and when any of the nobility was obliged to attend him, so great was their dread that they took leave of their families, as if preparing for 'death'." Burhan is no doubt moderate of tone but still gives a few instances of his cruelty and agrees with Ferishta that people were so tired of his tyranny that the poet Naziri only voiced their feeling when he composed the following chronogram:

Humayun Shah has passed away from the world,  
God Almighty, what a blessing was the death of Humayun!  
On the date of his death, the world was full of delight,  
So, 'delight of the world' gave the date of his death.

"It is absolutely necessary for one who tries to estimate the real character of a historical personage to try to put himself in the surroundings in which that personage lived so as to find his bearings as objectively as possible. Humayun reigned less than three years and a half, and the first thing to remember is that there was not a single campaign of aggression against his neighbours during the period. This only goes to prove that, like his predecessor, Muhammad I, his object was to find time to consolidate his far-flung State rather than extend it to unmanageable boundaries. This view is supported by the high ideals of government which he enunciated in the address delivered at the time of his accession. Nevertheless, his reign was marred by almost continuous rebellions and attempts at his throne and his life, and this at the hands of those nearest and dearest to him. Practically the whole course of these episodes shows that he followed the new policy of compromise and was forgiving and complacent right up to the middle of 864/1460, and whatever cruelties are ascribed to him, could only have occurred between Sha'ban 868—June 1460 and 28-11-865/4-9-1461. His father had appointed him heir to the throne,

still the party which was in power since Shaikh Azari's letter to Ahmad II, i.e., the New-comers put his younger brother on the throne and perhaps actually sent a mob to murder him and rob his residence. Instead of laying his hand of vengeance on his deadly enemies, he contented himself by imprisoning the leaders and the mob which had supported him. We meet him next fighting against his kinsmen Sikander Khan and Jalal Khan at Nalgunda, where, while carrying on the struggle which might have meant his own end, he enters into pourparlers with them and frankly says that he would prefer peace to war. Even when fighting had gone on for a whole day, he made a definite offer of jagirs to Sikander. And after Sikander's death and Jalal's defeat the miracle happens and on Maliku't-Tujjar's intercession Jalal is spared of his life.

"All this does not depict Humayun in the colours of a wanton cut throat, and there is nothing during the first two years of his reign to warrant his condemnation. It is really after the second proclamation of Hasan Khan as king, this time at Bir, and his subsequent capture some time about the middle of 864/1460, that Humayun is said to have given vent to his cruel propensities. We must remember that the two struggles with Hasan were a matter of life and death for the king. It is absolutely clear that the party of New-comers which had got the upper hand in the reigns of Ahmad I and Ahmad II was so headstrong that it chose to put on the throne a puppet in Hasan Khan in preference to a strong-willed ruler like Humayun. It is noticeable that the six or seven thousand men who were imprisoned after the failure of the first attempt are described by Ferishta in almost the identical vocabulary as used for those who had been massacred at Chakan in 850/1447. Jalal, the father of Sikander, an arch rebel in Humayun's reign was a New-comer and it seems probable that up to 864/1460 Humayun had thought that he would be able to make some kind of compromise with this party and perhaps forestall the moderating policy later adopted by Mahmud Gawan. The eye-opener came in the form of the recrudescence of disorder by the forced release of Hasan Khan and his followers by another New-comer, Yusuf Turk, and the renewal of the life and death struggle. Humayun could not let matters go on like this, and during the last thirteen months of his short reign he subjected his enemies to exemplary punishment. It goes to Mahmud Gawan's credit that while he interfered so long as he had any hope of a compromise, he retired to the background when all hopes were evidently shattered by the realease of Hasan Khan and his supporters and by his second proclamation as king in 864/1460.....

"It is therefore clear that the picture of Humayun's character as painted by our Persian authorities and in particular by Ferishta has exaggerated the king's defects to such an extent that it is difficult to recognise the real man among the multitude of crimes laid to his charge. Both from the recorded occurrences of his short reign as well as from other sources, we must come to the conclusion that Humayun was a ruler of the ordinary Bahmani type but was at the same time a strict disciplinarian, intent on striking balance between



the Old-comers and the New-comers and the original inhabitants of the land while trying to keep the kingdom in peace as far as possible. It is remarkable that there is not a single campaign undertaken outside the frontiers of the kingdom right through his reign, which shows that he wanted to consolidate the state rather than be aggressive towards others. But internal turmoil cost him all his praiseworthy projects, and, thanks to intense propaganda carried on against him, even his reputation." (*The Bahmanis of the Deccan*, pp. 264-67, 270.)

### **Nizam Shah (1461-63)**

Humayun was succeeded by his son Nizam Shah. As he was a minor, the work of the administration was carried on by his mother Makhdumah Jahan with the help of Khwaja Jahan and Mahmud Gawan. The rulers of Orissa and Telingana attacked the Bahmani empire but they were defeated. Mahmud Shah Khalji of Malwa attacked the Bahmani kingdom and besieged Bidar. The armies of the Bahmani kingdom were defeated. However, a request was made to the ruler of Gujarat for help and when that came the ruler of Malwa had to retire. Another attempt was made by the ruler of Malwa in 1462 but that also failed. Nizam Shah ruled from September 1461 to July 1463. He was succeeded by his brother who took up the title of Muhammad Shah III.

### **Muhammad Shah III (1463-82)**

At the time of his accession, Muhammad was only 9. As Khwaja Jahan, the Wazir, embezzled the public funds, he was condemned in open Darbar and murdered by one of the nobles of the court. The place of Khwaja Jahan was taken by Mahmud Gawan who was also given the title of Khwaja Jahan. Gawan extended the territory of the Bahmani kingdom to an extent never reached before.

In 1469, Gawan tried to subdue the Hindu Rajas of the Konkan. When he had captured many forts, Raja of Sanghameshwar surrendered the fortress of Khalna to the agents of Gawan. According to the author of *Burhan-i Massir*, "The unrivalled minister seized many forts and towns and captured immense booty and valuable goods such as horses, elephants, maidens and female slaves as well as precious jewels and pearls fell into the Minister's hands." Gawan also captured Goa. The forts of Rajamundry and Kondavir were also captured. There was a famine in 1474 and a large number of persons died. In 1478, Muhammad Shah III invaded and devastated Orissa. The ruler of Orissa gave to the Sultan many elephants and other valuable gifts. In 1481, Kanchi or Conjeevaram was attacked. The old temples of that place "were the wonder of the age, filled with countless concealed treasures and jewels and valuable pearls, besides innumerable slave girls." The fort was captured by a determined assault and immense booty fell into the hands of the victors who "levelled the city and its temples with the ground and overthrew all the symbols of infidelity."



In 1470 Nikitin, a Russian merchant, visited Bidar and he has made the following observations with regard to the Bahmani kingdom: "The Sultan is a little man, twenty years old, in the power of the nobles. Khorassanians rule the country and serve in war. There is a Khorassanian Bover, Malik-Tuchar, who keeps an army of 200,000 men; Malik Khan keeps 100,000; Kharat Khan 20,000 and many are the Khans that keep 10,000 armed men.

"The Sultan goes out with 300,000 men of his own troops. The land is overstocked with people: but those in the country are very miserable, whilst the nobles are extremely opulent and delight in luxury. They are wont to be carried on their silver beds, preceded by some 20 chargers caparisoned in gold, and followed by 300 men on horse-back and 500 on foot, and by horn-men, ten torch-bearers and ten musicians.

"The Sultan goes out hunting with his mother and his lady, and a train of 10,000 men on horse-back, 50,000 on foot, 200 elephants adorned in gilded armour, and in front 100 horn-men, 100 dancers, and 300 common horses in golden clothing, 100 monkeys, and 100 concubines, all foreign (haurikies).

"The Sultan's palace has seven gates, and in each gate are seated 100 guards and 100 Muhammadan scribes, who enter the names of all persons going in and out. Foreigners are not admitted into the town. This palace is very wonderful; everything in it is carved or gilded, and, even to the smallest stone, is cut and ornamented with gold most wonderfully. Several courts of justice are within the building. Throughout the night the town of Bidar is guarded by 1,000 Kutovalovies (Kotwals), mounted on horses in full armour, carrying each a light."

While the military record of Muhammad Shah III is one of triumph, the Sultan himself became mentally unbalanced on account of his habit of drinking hard. In 1481, he committed a blunder by getting Mahmud Gawan murdered.

According to Prof. Sherwani, "Muhammad's reign is one of the tragedies in the history of the Deccan. It saw the greatest triumph of Khwaja-i-Jahan Mahmud Gawan, and so long as this minister had control over the affairs of the kingdom the Bahmani state attained heights of prosperity which it had never reached before. But with the death of the Dowager Queen, the king's weak temperament was seen in all its gloomy aspects, and the martyrdom of erstwhile preceptor was the result. It has already been noted that the reign saw the continuation of a policy of equilibrium between the two great political groups of the state and this, coupled with the minister's murder, led to remarkable consequences. Mahmud Gawan was succeeded by Nizam-ul-Mulk, and although his party had now the monopoly of power, still the danger of life and honour loomed large and he felt it incumbent to ally himself with some of his erstwhile opponents. We also see Imad-ul-Mulk, a **dakhni**, and Khudawand Khan, a **habashi**, making common cause with Yusuf, Adil and Afaqi, and a joint army consisting both of New-comers and Old-comers being

sent against the Raya of Vijayanagar. We also see Fakhr-ul-Mulk, a *dakhni* preferring to go to Bijapur along with Yusuf Adil. This alliance of the two great political groups was probably the dream of the late minister which he was not permitted to see realised in his life-time.

"Unfortunately, however, there was no one left in the kingdom who could control these new forces and lead them towards a constructive end for the strength and betterment of the state; and all who had any foresight saw that the kingdom was on the brink of an abyss. It was known that the king was fast ending his own life in debauchery and drink and his heir was more or less of the same age as he himself had been when he had ascended the throne. In his own infancy the state had been ruled by three of the most stalwart personages of the Deccan, while now, with Muhammad's approaching end, matters were sure to deteriorate in spite of the care which he had taken to get his heir accepted by all in his own life-time. There was no one to keep the centrifugal forces in check which were fast at work to get the better of the tottering empire. Patriotism and loyalty there were none, and the weakness of the centre and strong unscrupulous counter-forces led only one way, towards dissolution of the Empire into petty states." (*The Bahmanis of the Deccan*, pp. 343-45.)

### **Mahmud Gawan**

Mahmud Gawan was, by common consent, the greatest of the Mohammadan administrators of the Deccan. He was a native of Qawan or Gawan in Iran. His ancestors were the Wazir of Shah Gilan. At the age of 45, Mahmud Gawan went to the Deccan for trade. Ala-ud-Din II made him an Amir of his court. His son Humayun conferred upon him the title of Malik-ul-Tujjar. After the murder of Khwaja Jahan, Muhammad Shah III made Mahmud Gawan the chief authority in the State. Although the new minister was given unlimited powers, he behaved with moderation. With a singleness of aim which was unparalleled in the history of the Bahmani empire, he devoted himself to the service of the State. He fought wars, subdued countries and "increased the Bahmani dominions to an extent never reached before."

Mahmud Gawan was a great administrator. He re-organised the military department of the State and gave the entire control into the hands of the Sultan in order to weaken the position of the nobles. The mutual dissensions of the Deccanis and the foreigners were a source of great trouble. The natives of the Deccan were less energetic and enterprising than those of the more northern latitudes, and, being unable to compete with the hardy Arab, the intellectual Persian and the virile Turk, they are obliged to give place to them at court as well as in camp. The quarrels among them were also complicated by sectarian differences. The natives were all Sunnis but the foreigners were mostly Shias. The conflicts were not confined to mere intrigues for place and power but frequently found expression in pitched battles and bloody massacres.

Mahmud Gawan completely enjoyed the confidence of the Sultan. He was entrusted with his reforms with success with the aid of the party of the other. He organised the finances. He reformed the administration of justice. He encouraged public education. In order to make the State demand just and equitable, the taxes levied were reduced. Corrupt practices were punished. Those who were guilty were punished. The army was reorganised better discipline was enforced. Projects of the soldiers were checked.

However, his enemies of the jealousy of the Deccanis and a conspiracy was made to take his life. The keeper of the seals of Gawan was bribed and he was induced to affix the seals to a blank paper on which a letter was written from Mahmud Gawan to the ruler of Vijayanagar containing treasonable matter. That letter was sent before the Sultan whose ears had already been poisoned by his enemies. The Sultan called Gawan to his private apartment and put him the following question: "If a slave of mine is detected to be a betrayer and his crime is proved, what should be his punishment?" Without knowing the purpose of the Sultan, Mahmud Gawan replied thus: "The unfortunate wretch who practices treason against his lord should meet with nothing but the execution." The Sultan showed Gawan the letter and the reply of Gawan and although the seals were his, the letter was a forged one. The Sultan did not care to go into the merits of the case and sentenced to his slave Jahar and he cut off the head of Mahmud Gawan. The last words of Mahmud Gawan were: "The death of an old man like me is of little moment to himself, but to you (Muhammad Shah III) it will prove the ruin of an empire and of your own glory." According to Meadows Taylor, the murder of Gawan was the beginning of the end and "with him departed all the cohesion and power of the Bahmani kingdom." Muhammad Shah died within a year of the murder of Gawan, "crying out with his last breath that Mahmud Gawan was slaying him."

The whole of the life of Mahmud Gawan can be summed up in the word 'devotion'. He was devoted to the interest of the Bahmani kingdom. He was devoted to the ideal of territorial expansion. He was devoted to administrative reforms. He fought wars and brought glory to the Bahmani kingdom. Although he was at the helm of the affairs of the State, he lived a very simple life. His wants were very few. He slept on a mattress. His food was cooked in earthen vessels. On Friday night, he went from one Parish of the city to another and gave help to the poor and the needy. He loved scholarship and he possessed a personal library of about 3,000 books. He loved the company of learned men. He was well-versed in mathematics, literature and medicine. According to Ferishta, Gawan was the author of two works known as **Rauzat-ul-Insha** and **Diwan-i-Ashr**.

However, such a saintly person had one blot on his character. He was very enthusiastic in the persecution of the non-Muslims. He was ferocious and blood-thirsty like his master against the Hindus.

The ruler of Gawan at the age of 78, was a calamity and that a calamity to the foundation of the Bahmani kingdom.

### Mahmud Shah (1492-1518)

Muhammad Shah III was succeeded by his son Mahmud Shah. He was a minor when he became king. When he reached maturity, he became an alcoholic. He spent all his time in the company of thousands of leaders who flocked to his court from all quarters. "The people following the example of their king, attended to nothing but dissipation. Revered sages pawned their very garments at the wine-cellars and holy teachers quitting their colleges retired to taverns and presided over the wine flask." The feuds between the Deccanis and the foreigners continued. The provincial governors took advantage of the prevailing confusion and declared themselves independent. The nominal authority of Mahmud Shah was confined to a small area round the capital. He and his four successors were mere puppets in the hands of Qasim Barid-ul-Mamalik and after his death in those of his son Amir Ali Barid, 'the fox of the Deccan'. The last ruler of the Bahmani kingdom was Kalim Ullah Shah and he came to the throne in 1524. He died in 1527 and with him came the end of the Bahmani kingdom after its existence of about 180 years.

It is to be observed that there were 18 rulers of the Bahmani kingdom. Five of them were murdered, Two of them died of intemperance. Three of them were deposed and two of them were blinded. Most of the rulers of the Bahmani kingdom were busy with their wars with the Vijayanagar empire. Most of them were tyrants and followed a policy of persecution of the Hindus. Their armies caused much suffering to the people.

### Five Kingdoms

After the break-up of the Bahmani kingdom, five separate states of the Muslims came into existence. The most important of the five was the **Adilshahi kingdom of Bijapur**. It was founded by Yusuf Adil Shah. Yusuf Adil Shah possessed great ability and strength of character and rose to prominence in the service of

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1. Prof. Sherwani observes thus: "The King died on 4-12-924/7 12-1518. For all intents and purposes, the Bahmani state had come to an end and practically all our chroniclers are united in the assertion that with his death the fetholders assumed royal titles...The fact, however, remains that with Mahmud disappeared at least the glory—or what was left of it—of the Bahmani dynasty. His frequent complaints that he was a prisoner in his own palace in the firm grasp of others, his complaint to Yusuf Adil that nothing he owned really belonged to him, his being led by whoever was powerful enough to have the upper hand at Bidar, all this made the centre effete and useless. He himself was really indifferent as to which of his governor gained the upper hand, and it is related that in one of the campaigns of 'Imadu'll-Mulk against Amir Barid towards the end of the reign, which the former had undertaken to rid the Sultan of the guardianship of the Baridis, he would not leave his bath even when both sides were on the point of coming to grips for gaining ascendancy over him. When his would-be protector came to know of his stereo-comic episode, he flew into a rage, and the King quietly crossed over to Amir Barid's camp." (*The Bahmanis of the Deccan*, pp. 386-87.)



Mahmud Gawan. He made himself an independent king of Bijapur in 1482-80. Although he had preference for the Shia sect, he granted toleration to all. He did not hesitate to employ even Hindus in his government. He was just and humane. Scholars from Persia, Turkistan and other Central Asian countries went to his court. His four immediate successors were not able and there were intrigues during their reigns. Ibrahim Adil Shah II was the sixth ruler and he ruled from 1579 to 1625. According to Meadows Taylor, "He was the greatest of all the kings of the Adilshahi dynasty and, in most respects, except its founder, the most able and popular." In 1618-19, he annexed the kingdom of Bidar to Bijapur. Bijapur was annexed to the Mughal empire by Aurangzeb in 1686.

The **Nizamshahi kingdom of Ahmadnagar** was founded by Malik Ahmad. His father, Nizam-ul-Mulk Bahri, was a converted Hindu and Prime Minister of the Bahmani kingdom. Malik Ahmed declared himself independent in 1490. He founded the city of Ahmadnagar and made it his capital. In 1499, he captured Daulatabad. He was succeeded by his son Burhan-i-Nizam Shah in 1508. Husain Shah was the third ruler of the dynasty. In 1565, he joined the Muslim confederacy against Vijayanagar. The other rulers of this kingdom were weak. In 1600 Ahmadnagar was defeated by Akbar. However, it was annexed to the Mughal empire in 1636.

The **Imadshahi kingdom of Berar** was founded by Fateh Ullah Imad Shah. He became independent in 1490. It was conquered and annexed by Ahmadnagar in 1574.

The **Qutubshahi kingdom of Golconda** was founded by Qutub Shah who was a Turkish officer of the Bahmani kingdom. Previously, he was the governor of Telingana under the Bahmani kingdom. He declared himself independent in 1512 or 1518. He ruled up to 1543. Qutub Shah was succeeded by his son Jamshid. The name of the third ruler was Ibrahim. It was during his reign that Golconda came into conflict with Vijayanagar. It was annexed to the Mughal empire by Aurangzeb in 1687.

The **Baridshahi kingdom of Bidar** was founded by Amir Ali Barid in 1526 or 1527. In 1618-19, Bidar was annexed by Bijapur.

### **Party Strife in Bahmani Empire**

A very important feature of the Deccan politics during the days of the latter Bahmani kings was the perpetual strife between the Deccani and Pardesi nobles. The mutual hatred nursed by both the parties flashed into a flame. The political strife assumed serious dimensions in the reign of Ala-ud-Din II (1436-1458) and remained a source of danger even after that in the history of the Deccan Sultans. As a matter of fact, this insane rivalry was primarily responsible for the disintegration of the Bahmani kingdom.

In order to understand the origin of this rivalry, one is to analyse the composition of Muhammadan aristocracy which ruled the Deccan. By about the middle of the 15th century, this class had split itself into rival groups known as the Deccanis and the

Pardesis or New-comers. The Deccanis were domiciled Muham-madans. It is true that they had originally come from outside the Deccan but their long stay in the Deccan changed their manners, ways of living and outlook on life. Even their complexion was changed. The Deccanis had become the natives of the country and had no extra-territorial interests. Many of them had native blood in their veins as a number of the Muslim invaders married Indian women. The Deccanis had also many Hindu converts to Islam. Fathullah Imad Shah, the founder of the Imad Shahi dynasty of Berar and Ahmad Nizam Shah, who established the kingdom of Ahmednagar, were both originally Brahmans. The Deccanis looked upon their native land as their particular preserve and viewed with suspicion every foreigner in the Deccan as a future rival and a possible competitor for a position at the Court.

The Pardesis or the New-comers were not the natives of the Deccan. Year by year, they came into the country from abroad in increasing numbers. The Bahmani kings made it a matter of policy to employ foreign adventurers freely in their army. A continuous supply of these adventurers, mostly soldiers, poured into the country. A number of them came for trade and found it to their advantage to remain connected with the politics of the country. In those days, the Deccan was the land of adventure and promise to the soldiers of fortune from Persia, Turkey, Central Asia, Arabia and Afghanistan. The Deccan was the land where valour was recognised and statesman-ship was rewarded.

From the very beginning of the Bahmani kingdom, the Pardesis wielded considerable influence in the politics of the country. Bahman Shah himself had persuaded many Afghan and Mughal Amirs to join his standard. That policy was continued by his successors who attracted and ensured a continuous supply of foreigners. Mujahid Shah, in particular, showed great preference for Persians and Turks. It was this policy of preference and exclusion that created in the Deccanis a feeling of grievance.

To begin with, the Pardesis were few in number and the Deccanis did not feel their competition. However, with the lapse of time, the Pardesis gained in strength and formed a distinct party. That also checked the process of assimilation. When they were few in number, they inter-married with the native Deccanis and were soon merged into the bigger community. However, with the growth of the Pardesi party, the foreigners became conscious of their separate entity. The result was that there came into existence two distinct parties known as the Deccanis and Pardesis. Generally speaking, the Pardesis were more energetic and enterprising than the Deccanis. They were employed in preference to the Deccanis. Many Pardesis rose to the highest office in the State and the Deccanis found themselves surpassed both in the battlefield and in the Council Chamber. That led to recriminations and quarrels.

There were religious differences between the Deccanis and Pardesis. A majority of the Pardesis were Shias and most of the Deccanis were Sunnis. The religious factor brought to the side of

the Deccanis the Abyssinians who were mostly Sunnis. In competition with the fair, handsome, cultured Pardesis from Persia, Turkey, etc., the dark-skinned and illiterate Abyssinians were at a great disadvantage and were treated with contempt by the Pardesis. The result was that the Abyssinians joined the Deccanis. In the party strife that followed between the Deccanis and Pardesis, the former party consisted of the Deccanis and Abyssinians and the latter consisted of the Turks, Mughals, Persians and Arabs.

Towards the close of the 14th century, the Deccanis realised that they were being gradually displaced from power by the Pardesis. They did not retaliate immediately and patiently waited for an opportunity to gain the upper hand. In the reign of Ahmad Shah (1422-1436), the Deccanis manoeuvred themselves into the favour of the Sultan by well-calculated flattery, judicious self-praise and subtle insinuation against their rivals. During 1430-31 A.D., the Bahmani Army was defeated on three successive occasions by the Gujaratis. Khalaf Hasan Basari, the Pardesi Minister, attributed these reverses to the cowardice of the Deccanis. However, the Deccanis were able to convince the King of the incompetence of the Pardesi adviser. The result was that the Deccanis were raised to power and the administration of the country was entrusted to a member of their party. On coming to power, the Deccanis openly manifested their desire to suppress the Pardesis. In 1477, they massacred a large number of Pardesis by treachery. When the ruler came to know of the truth, he severely punished the Deccanis for misguiding him and degraded the Deccanis in the court. Thus, the Pardesis once again came to power.

The relations between the two factions became very bitter, and there was absolutely no scope for compromise. Each party wanted to destroy and uproot the other. In 1481, the Deccani party brought about the murder of Mahmud Gawan, the Pardesi Minister of Mohammad Shah. The false accusation and violent death of Gawan constituted one of the tragedies of Medieval India. Gawan had tried to maintain balance between the Deccanis and the Pardesis by an equal division of offices between the rival parties. He curtailed the powers of the provincial governors. Hassan Nizam-ul-Mulk was jealous of the position of Gawan and he instigated his followers to put an end to his life. A number of the Deccanis entered into a conspiracy to bring about the fall of Gawan. A forged letter with the seal of Gawan, purporting to invite the Raja of Orissa to invade the Bahmani kingdom, was suddenly found and Mahmud Gawan was put to death by the order of Mohammad Shah.

The murder of Mahmud Gawan was the immediate cause of the dissolution of the Bahmani kingdom. The Pardesi Amirs refused to stay in the capital and returned to their provinces without the formality of obtaining the permission of the King. Even the respectable members of the Deccani party openly expressed their disapproval of the acts of the conspirators and joined the camp of Yusuf Adil Khan. Deserted by the foreigners and some

of the Deccanis, the King was forced to throw himself into the arms of the conspirators. Hasan Nizam-ul-Mulk was appointed Malik Nabh and all the affairs of the kingdom were placed in his hands. Mohammad Shah died very soon after the death of Mahmud Gawan. As his son and successor was a minor, authority remained in the hands of Hasan Nizam-ul-Mulk. The Deccanis formed a conspiracy to kill Yusuf Adil Khan and turn out his followers. The Pardesis came to know of the plot and there was fighting for 20 days at Bidar. Ultimately, Yusuf Adil Khan agreed to retire to Bijapur and Hasan Nizam-ul-Mulk remained at the helm of affairs in the Bahmani capital. Hasan Nizam-ul-Mulk did not live long as he was put to death by the Abyssinian Governor of Bidar. That brought the Pardesis to power. The Deccanis once again formed a conspiracy to murder the king and place another prince of the royal blood on the throne. They suddenly attacked the royal palace in October 1447, but were repulsed by the valour of the Turki guard. The King assembled his foreign troops and ordered the conspirators to be put to death. The slaughter continued for three days and the Pardesis inflicted a terrible retribution on the Deccanis for the wrongs they had suffered. After that, Mohammad Shah took no interest in the affairs of the State. The prestige of the Bahmani kingdom was gone. The provincial governors became practically independent and did not bother about the central authority. Expeditions were sent against Ahmad Nizam-ul-Mulk, the son of Hasan Nizam-ul-Mulk who had revolted against the central authority. But those expeditions failed as Ahmad had the full sympathy of Yusuf Adil Khan who even suggested to secede from the Bahmani kingdom. In June 1490, Ahmad Nizam-ul-Mulk declared himself as an independent ruler. Fathullah Imad-ul-Mulk of Berar and Yusuf Adil Khan of Bijapur also declared themselves independent and thus the Bahmani kingdom was broken up.

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## CHAPTER XIV

# The Vijayanagar Empire

### Its Origin

The early history of Vijayanagar is obscure. Sewell, the famous author of "**A Forgotten Empire**", has referred to many traditional accounts about the origin of the city of Vijayanagar and observed that "perhaps the reasonable account would be called from the general drift of the Hindu legends combined with the certainties of historical facts." Sewell accepts the tradition according to which five sons of Sangama, including Harihara and Bukka, laid the foundation of Vijayanagar on the southern bank of the river Tungabhadra facing the fort of Anegundi on the northern bank. Madhava Vidyaranya and Sayana, two great scholars of the age, were responsible for inspiring the sons of Sangama to do the needful.

It is stated in an inscription of Marappa that evil having encompassed the earth, God caused Sangama to be born in royal line for the help of Dharma. Out of the five sons of Sangama, three guarded the northern frontier from Goa in the west to Nellore in the east and the other two captured the south from the Sultanate of Madura. There could be no better opportunity to liberate their country from the Muslims than the present one.

The view of the late Rev. Father Heras was that the foundation of the city of Anegundi, which formed the cradle of the Vijayanagar empire, was laid by Vira Ballala III, the Hoysala king and Harihara who was a near relative of the ruling family of Hoysala, was a frontier officer.

According to another writer, "The fortification of the city that afterwards became Vijayanagar must be regarded as the deliberate act of the great Hoysala ruler, Vira Ballala III. It was founded soon after the destruction of Kampili by the army of Muhammad Tughluq, and immediately following the invasion of the Hoysala capital, Doara-Samudar."

Another view is that five sons of Sangama were fugitives from the Telugu country included in the Kakatiya kingdom of Warangal whose capital was captured by the Muslims in 1424 A.D.

This much can be said with certainty that the Vijayanagar empire was founded in 1336 by Harihara and Bukka, two of the five sons of Sangama. They were responsible for organising the resistance against the advance of the invaders from the north and they were successful in doing so for about three centuries.

### **Sangama Dynasty : Harihara I**

The dynasty founded by Harihara I and Bukka I is known as Sangama dynasty after the name of their father Sangama. Harihara was successful in extending the boundaries of his little kingdom. By 1340, he established his control over the valley of the Tungabhadra, portions of the Konkan and the Malabar coast. Harihara and Bukka did not assume any royal title as Ballala III of the Hoysala dynasty was still alive and he exercised sovereignty over the southern districts and the Sultan of Madura claimed authority over the south eastern part of the Peninsula. Harihara I took part in 1344 in the confederacy organized by Krishna Nayak of Warangal to drive out the Muslims from the Deccan. When Virupaksha Ballala, the last king of the Hoysala dynasty, died fighting against the Sultan of Madura in 1346, Harihara and Bukka brought under their control the dominions of the Hoysalas. The brothers continued their career of conquest and consequently within the lifetime of Harihara I, the kingdom of Vijayanagar extended from the Krishna in the north to the neighbourhood of the Kaveri in the south and comprised the whole country situated between the eastern and western oceans. In 1352, Ala-ud-Din Hasan Bahman Shah attacked Vijayanagar. Harihara I had to surrender a portion of his territory to the Bahmani ruler. He divided his empire into provinces which were placed under the charge of the members of the royal family and "trustworthy viceroys". Harihara died in about 1353 and was succeeded by his brother Bukka I.

### **Bukka I**

Bukka I ruled from 1353 to 1379. He completed the building of the city of Vijayanagar and also added to his empire. He is described in inscriptions as the master of the Eastern, Western and Southern Oceans. He sent a mission to the Emperor of China. He fought against Muhammad Shah and Mujahid Shah of the Bahmani kingdom. As he was defeated, a large number of Hindus were massacred by the Muslims.

Bukka I was a liberal-minded ruler. On one occasion, he brought about a reconciliation between the Jains and the Vaishnavas by asking them to worship in their own manner with equal freedom.

### **Harihara II**

Bukka I was succeeded by his son, Harihara II, who ruled from 1379 to 1406 A.D. He took up the titles of Maharajadhiraja and Rajaparamesvara. On the authority of some Muslim historians, Sewell had stated that the reign of Harihara II was a

period of "unbroken peace". However, it has been proved by inscriptions that there were wars between Vijayanagar and the Muslim States. In 1398, Bukka II, son of Harihara II, attacked the Bahmani kingdom in order to capture the Raichur Doab. However, he was opposed and defeated by Firuz Shah of the Bahmani kingdom. A peace was made in 1399 by which Firuz was to get a heavy indemnity. It appears from inscriptions that the Vijayanagar empire in the time of Harihara II extended over the whole of Southern India including Mysore, Kanara, Chingleput, Trichinopoly and Conjeevaram or Kanchi. It is true that Harihara II was a worshipper of Siva but he was tolerant towards other religions.

### Deva Raya I

Harihara II was succeeded by his son Deva Raya I who ruled from 1406 to 1422. In his war with the Bahmani kingdom, Deva Raya I was defeated. The next ruler was **Vijaya-Bukka** or **Vira Vijaya**. He ruled for a few months and was succeeded by Deva Raya II.

### Deva Raya II

Deva Raya II ruled from 1422 to 1446. War with the Bahmani kingdom continued and Ahmed Shah massacred women and children of Vijayanagar mercilessly. He celebrated a carnival for three days when the number of Hindus who had been killed reached 20,000. Deva Raya was so much impressed by the efficiency of the Muslim cavalry that he decided to recruit Muslim horsemen in his own army. While doing so, he did not care for his personal religious prejudices. War with the Bahmani kingdom started once again in 1443 and the Muslims inflicted heavy losses upon him. Ultimately, he has forced to pay tribute to the Bahmani rulers.

Deva Raya II made many reforms. He appointed Lakkanna or Lakshmana to the "Lordship of the Southern Sea", i.e. in-charge of overseas commerce. It was during his reign that Vijayanagar was visited by two foreigners. Nicolo Conti visited Vijayanagar about the year 1420 or 1421. Abdur Razzaq, an envoy from Persia, visited Vijayanagar in 1442 and remained there till the beginning of April, 1443. Both of them have given an interesting account of what they saw.

According to Nicolo Conti, "The great city of Bizengalia is situated near very steep mountains. The circumference of the city is sixty miles; its walls are carried up to the mountains and enclosed the valleys at their foot, so that its extent is thereby increased. In this city there are estimated to be ninety thousand men fit to bear arms.

"The inhabitants of this region marry as many wives as they please, who are burnt with their dead husbands. Their king is more powerful than all the other kings of India. He takes to himself 12,000 wives of whom 4,000 follow him on foot wherever he may

go, and are employed solely in the service of the kitchen. A like number, more handsomely equipped, ride on horseback. The remainder are carried by men in litters, of whom 2 000 or 3,000 are selected as his wives, on condition that at his death they should voluntarily burn themselves with him, which is considered to be great honour for them.

"At a certain time of the year their idol is carried through the city, placed between two chariots, in which are young women richly adorned, who sing hymns to the god, and accompanied by a great concourse of people. Many, carried away by the fervour of their faith, cast themselves on the ground before the wheels, in order that they may be crushed to death—a mode of death which they say is very acceptable to their god ; others, making an incision in their side, and inserting a rope thus through their body, hang themselves to the chariot by way of ornament and thus suspended and half-dead accompany their idol. This kind of sacrifice they consider best and most acceptable of all.

"Thrice in the year they keep festivals of special solemnity. On one of these occasions the males and females of all ages, having bathed in the rivers or the sea, clothe themselves in new garments, and spend three entire days in singing, dancing and feasting. On another of these festivals they fix up within their temples, and on the outside, on their roofs, an innumerable number of lamps of oil of susimani, which are kept burning day and night. On the third, which lasts nine days, they set up in all the highways large beams, like the masts of small ships, to the upper part of which are attached pieces of very beautiful cloth of various kinds interwoven with gold. On the summit of each of these beams is each day placed a Man of pious aspect, dedicated to religion, capable of enduring all things, with equanimity, who is to pray for the favour of God. These men are assailed by the people, who pelt them with oranges, lemons, and other odoriferous fruits, all of which they bear most patiently. There are also three other festival days during which they sprinkle all passers-by, even the king and queen themselves, with saffron water, placed for that purpose by the way-side. This is received by all with much laughter."

According to Abdur Razzaq, "The city—Bijanagar is such that eye has not seen nor ever heard of any place resembling it upon the whole earth. It is so built that it has seven fortified walls one within the other. Beyond the circuit of the outer walls there is an esplanade extending for about fifty yards, in which stones are fixed near one another to the height of a man : one half buried firmly in the earth, and the other half rises above it, so that neither foot nor horse, however bold, can advance with facility near the outer wall. If any one wishes to learn how this resembles the city of Hirat, let him understand that the outer fortification answers to that which extends from the hill of Mukhtar and the pass of 'the Two Brothers' to the banks of the river, and the bridge of Malan, which lies to the east of the village of Ghizar, and to the west of the village of Siban.



"The fortress is in the form of a circle, situated on the summit of a hill, and is made of stone and mortar, with strong gates, where guards are always posted, who are very diligent in the collection of taxes (*jiyat*). The second fortress represents the space which extends from the bridge of the New River to the bridge of the pass of Kara, to the east of the bridge of Rangina and Jakan and to the west of the garden of Zibanda, and the village of Jasan. The third fortress would contain the space which lies between the tomb of the Imam Fakhr-ud-Din Razi to the vaulted tomb of Muhammad Sultan Shah. The fourth would represent the space which lies between the bridge of Anjil and the bridge of Karad. The fifth may be reckoned equivalent to the space which lies between the garden of Zaghan and the bridge of the river Jakan. The sixth fortification would comprehend the distance between the gate of the king and that of Firozabad. The seventh fortress is placed in the centre of the others, and occupies ground ten times greater than the chief market of Hirat. In that is situated the palace of the king. From the northern gate of the outer fortress to the southern is a distance of two statute *parasangs*, and the same with respect to the distance between the eastern and western gates. Between the first, second, and third walls, there are cultivated fields, gardens and houses. From the third to the seventh fortress, shops and bazars are closely crowded together. By the palace of the king, there are four bazars, situated opposite to one another. That which lies to the north is the imperial palace or abode of the Rai. At the head of each bazar, there is lofty arcade and magnificent gallery, but the palace of the king, is loftier than all of them. The bazars are very broad and long, so that the sellers of flowers, notwithstanding that they place high stands before their shops, are yet able to sell flowers from both sides. Sweet-scented flowers are always procurable fresh in that city, and they are considered as even necessary sustenance, seeing that without them they could not exist. The tradesmen of each separate guild or craft have their shops close to one another. The jewellers sell their rubies and pearls and diamonds and emeralds openly in the bazar.

"In this charming area, in which the palace of the king is contained, there are many rivulets and streams flowing through channels of cut stone, polished and even. On the right hand of the palace of the Sultan, there is the *diwan-khana*, or minister's office, which is extremely large and presents the appearance of a Chihalsutun, or forty-pillared hall, and in front of it, there runs a raised gallery, higher than the stature of a man, thirty yards long and six yards broad, where the records are kept and the scribes are seated.

"Each class of men belonging to each profession has shops contiguous the one to the other; the jewellers sell publicly in the bazar pearls, rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. In this agreeable locality, as well as in the king's palace, one sees numerous running streams and canals formed of chiselled stone, polished and smooth. On the left of the Sultan's portico, arises the *diwan-khana* (the council-house) which is extremely large and looks like a palace. In front of it is a hall, the height of which is above the stature of a man,

its length thirty **ghez**, and its breadth ten. In it is placed the **daftar-khana** (the archives), and here sit the scribes...In the middle of this palace, upon an high estrade, is seated a eunuch called Daiang who alone presides over the Divan. At the end of the hall stand chobdars (hussars) drawn up in line. Every man who comes upon any business, passes between the chobdars, offers a small present, prostrates himself with his face to the ground, then rising up explains the business which brought him there and the Daiang pronounces his opinion, according to the principles of justice adopted in this kingdom, and no one thereafter is allowed to make appeal.

"In this country, they have three kinds of money, made of gold mixed with alloy : one called **varahab**, weighs about one **mithkal**, equivalent to two **dinars**; **kopeki**, the second, which is called **pertab**, is the half of the first ; the third called **fanam**, is equivalent in value to the tenth part of the last mentioned coin. Of these different coins the **fanam** is the most useful. They cast in pure silver a coin which is the sixth of the **fanam**, which they call **tar**. This latter is also a very useful coin in currency. A copper coin with the third of a tar is called **dijitel**. According to the practice adopted in this empire, all the provinces at a fixed period, bring their gold to the mint. If any man receives from the divan an allowance in gold, he has to be paid by the **darabkhana**."

### **Mallikarjuna**

Deva Raya II was succeeded by his son Mallikarjuna who ruled from 1446 to 1465. He was successful in beating back a combined attack by the Bahmani Sultan and the Raja of Orissa. He was able to keep his kingdom intact. Narasimha, the Saluva chief of Chandragiri, came into prominence during this reign and he played an important part in checking foreign aggression.

### **Virupaksha II**

Mallikarjuna was succeeded by his brother Virupaksha II. He ruled from 1465 to 1486. As he was an incompetent ruler, there was confusion and disorder in the country. The result was that some of the provinces revolted against the central authority. The rulers of the Bahmani kingdom also tried to advance into the Doab between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra. Raja Purushottama Gajapati of Orissa advanced as far south as Tiruvannamalai. In order to save the Vijayanagar empire, Narasimha deposed Virupaksha II in 1486 and himself captured the throne. This is known as the First Usurpation. The Sangama dynasty was ended and the Saluva dynasty came into existence.

### **The Saluva Dynasty**

**Narasimha** ruled the Vijayanagar empire from 1486 to 1492. He enjoyed the confidence of the people and was able to subdue most of the revolted provinces. However, Udayagiri remained under the Raja of Orissa and the Raichur Doab under the Bahmani kingdom.

The contention of the Muhammadan historians is that Narasa Nayaka murdered the two sons of his master Narasimha Saluva and usurped the throne for himself. However, the inscriptions tell us that Narasa Nayaka placed on the throne **Immadi Narasimha**, the son of Narasimha Saluva and kept all the power in his own hands. His son deposed the last Saluva ruler and seated himself on the throne. This is known as the Second Usurpation which ended the rule of the Saluva dynasty and brought in the Taluva dynasty.

### **The Tuluva Dynasty**

Vir Narashima was the founder of the Tuluva dynasty. He ruled from 1505 to 1509. He was a pious king who distributed gifts at sacred places.

### **Krishna Deva Raya (1509-30)**

Vir Narasimha was succeeded by his brother, Krishna Deva Raya. He ruled from 1509 to 1530. He was the greatest ruler of Vijayanagar and one of the most famous kings in the history of India. Domingos Paes, the Portuguese traveller, has described Krishna Deva Raya in these words: "The king is of medium height, and of fair complexion and good figure, rather fat than thin; he has on his face signs of small-pox. He is the most feared and perfect king that could possibly be, cheerful of disposition and very merry; he is one that seeks to honour foreigners, and receives them kindly, asking about all their affairs whatever their condition may be. He is a great ruler and a man of much justice, but subject to sudden fits of rage and this is his title 'Crisnarao Macacao, king of kings, lord of the greater lords of India, lord of the three seas and of the land.'" He has this title because he is by rank a greater lord than any, by reason of what he possesses in armies and territories, but it seems that he has (in fact) nothing compared to what a man like him ought to have, so gallant and perfect is he in all things." Sewell tells us that Krishna Deva Raya was physically strong in his best days, and kept his strength up to the highest pitch by hard bodily exercise. "He rose early, and developed all his muscles by the use of the Indian clubs and the use of the sword: he was a fine rider, and was blessed with a noble presence, which favourably impressed all who came in contact with him. He commanded his enormous armies in person, was able, brave, and statesmanlike and was withal a man of much gentleness and generosity of character. He was beloved by all and respected by all. The only blot on his scutcheon is that after his great success over the Muhammadan king he grew to be haughty and insolent in his demands."

Krishna Deva Raya was not only an accomplished scholar himself but was also a patron of learning. According to Krishna Shastri, he was also famous "for his religious zeal and catholicity. He respected all sects of the Hindu religion alike, though his personal leanings were in favour of Vaishnavism. Krishna Raya's kindness to the fallen enemy, his acts of mercy and charity towards the residents of all captured cities, his great military prowess which endeared him alike to his feudatory chiefs and to his subjects, the royal reception



and kindness that he invariably bestowed upon foreign embassies, his imposing personal appearance, his genial look and polite conversation which distinguished a pure and dignified life, his love for literature and for religion, and his solicitude for the welfare of his people, and above all, the most fabulous wealth that he conferred on temples and Brahmins, mark him out indeed as the greatest of the South Indian monarchs who sheds a lustre on the pages of history."

Krishna Deva Raya was a great warrior and he was always successful in the wars waged by him. In 1510, he marched against the rebellious chief of Ummattur in Southern Mysore. The chief was defeated and the fort of Sivasamudram was captured. The other neighbouring chiefs were also made to submit. In 1521, Krishna Deva Raya took possession of Raichur. In 1513, he attacked Gajanati Prataparudra, the ruler of Orissa, in order to get back from him what had been snatched away by Orissa in the reigns of his predecessors. In 1514, he captured the fortress of Udayagiri. An uncle and an aunt of the ruler of Orissa were captured but they were treated with honour. In 1515, he captured the strong fortress of Kondavidu and other minor fortresses in spite of the help given by the rulers of Golkunda and Bidar to the ruler of Orissa. In another campaign against the ruler of Orissa, Krishna Deva Raya besieged Kondapalli and captured it. On this occasion, the wife and a son of the ruler of the Orissa and some nobles and generals fell into the hands of Krishna Deva Raya. He advanced as far as Simhachalam in the Vizagapatam district and forced the ruler of Orissa to come to terms. When Ismail Adil Shah tried to recover the Raichur Doab, he was defeated by Krishna Deva Raya in 1520. The Bijapur territory was run over by the forces of Krishna Deva Raya and the fortress of Gulbarga was razed to the ground. It was in this way that Krishna Deva Raya was able to extend his empire in South Konkan in the west, to Vizagapatam in the east and to the extreme border of the peninsula in the south.

Krishna Deva Raya had very friendly relations with the Portuguese. He gave them many concessions because he gained by the import of horses and other things. In 1510, Albuquerque, the Portuguese Governor, asked for permission to build a fort at Bhatkal and the same was granted.

### **Achyuta Raya (1530-42)**

Krishna Deva Raya was succeeded by Achyuta Raya who ruled from 1530 to 1542. It appears that he was not altogether the craven that he is represented by Nuniz to have been. He took to task the rebellious viceroy of Madura. A similar action was taken against the Raja of Travancore for his having given shelter to the viceroy of Madura. However, he made a mistake in leaving things into the hands of two brothers-in-law known as Tirumala. He also annoyed other viceroys. The result was that there was a lot of trouble in the Vijayanagar empire. Achyuta Raya was succeeded by his son **Venkatadri** or **Venkata I**. However, he ruled only for about 6 months. He was succeeded by Sadasiva Raya, a nephew of Achyuta.



**Sadasiva Raya (1542-70)**

Sadasiva Raya ruled from 1542 to 1570. He was merely a puppet in the hands of his minister Rama Raya. Rama Raya was a capable person and he was determined to restore the prestige of the Vijayanagar empire by actively interfering in the quarrels among the rulers of the Deccan, by joining one alliance or the other and thereby weakening them. His efforts were successful for some time but ultimately they proved disastrous to the empire. In 1543, Burhan Nizam Shah allied himself with Rama Raya and Qutub Shah of Golkunda and declared war upon Bijapur. Ali Adil Shah was able to come to terms with Burhan Nizam Shah by giving some territory through the cleverness of his minister Asad Khan. Asad Khan was also able to detach Vijayanagar from the alliance. After that, he marched against Golkunda and defeated Qutab Shah and wounded him. When Ibrahim Adil Shah died in 1557, Husain Nizam Shah invaded Bijapur. When this happened, Ali Adil Shah formed an alliance with Golkunda and Vijayanagar, invaded Ahmadnagar and demanded the restoration of Kalyan and Sholapur. The ruler of Ahmadnagar rejected the demand and war started. According to Ferishta, "The whole country was laid waste in such a manner that from Porundesh to Khiber and from Ahmadnagar to Daulatabad, not a mark of population was to be seen. The infidels of Beejanagar, who for many years had been wishing for such an event, left no cruelty unpractised. They insulted the honour of the Mussalman women, destroyed the mosques, and did not even respect the sacred Quaran."

The conduct of Vijayanagar on this occasion brought the Muslim rulers together against her. They decided to sink their differences and formed a quadruple alliance against Vijayanagar. Ibrahim Qutab Shah of Golkunda played an important part in bringing about this alliance. Nizam Shah was persuaded to give his daughter, Chand Bibi, in marriage to Adil Shah. The fort of Sholapur was given as dowry. Adil Shan himself gave his daughter in marriage to Sultan Murtaza, the eldest son of Nizam Shah. The Sultan of Berar was not invited to join the confederacy.

**Battle of Talikota (1565)**

The combined armies of the four princes began their march on 25th December 1564 towards the south. The allied Deccan Sultans fought against Vijayanagar on 23rd January 1565 at a site marked by two villages of Raksas and Tagdi. This is known as the battle of Talikota and in it the Muslims were victorious. Hasain Nizam Shah killed Rama Raya with his own hand and exclaimed: "Now I have avenged of thee! Let God do what he will to me." The battle ended not in a defeat but a complete rout. No attempt was made by the leaders of the various wings to stop the panic. The Hindus were slaughtered with great ferocity. About a lakh of them were killed. According to Ferishta, "The plunder was so great that every private man in the allied army became rich in gold, jewels, tents, arms, horses and slaves, the kings permitting every person to retain what he acquired reserving the elephants only for their own use."

Sewell, the famous author of "**A Forgotten Empire**", has given the following description of the fall of the city of Vijayanagar into the hands of the victorious armies of the Muslims : "There was little fear, therefore, for the safety of the city itself. That surely was safe ! But now came the dejected soldiers hurrying back from the fight, and amongst the foremost the panic stricken princes of the royal house. Within a few hours these craven chiefs hastily left the palace, carrying with them all the treasures on which they could lay their hands. Five hundred and fifty elephants, laden with treasure in gold, diamonds and precious stones valued at more than a hundred million sterling, and carrying the State insignia and the celebrated jewelled throne of the kings, left the city under convoy of bodies of soldiers, who remained true to the Crown. King Sadasiva was carried off by his jailor, Tirumala, now sole regent since the death of his brothers, and in long line the royal family and their followers fled southward towards the fortress of Penukonda.

"Then a panic seized the city. The truth became at last apparent. This was not a defeat merely, it was cataclysm. All hope was gone. The myriad dwellers in the city were left defenceless. No retreat, no fight was possible except of a few, for the pack-oxen and carts had almost all followed the forces to the war, and they had not returned. Nothing could be done but to bury all treasures, to arm the younger men and to wait. Next day the palace became a prey to the robber tribes and jungle people of the neighbourhood. Hordes of Brinjaris, Lambadis, Kurubas, and the like, pounced down on the helpless city and looted the stores and shops, carrying off great quantities of riches. Conto states that there were six concerted attacks by these people during the day.

"The third day saw the beginning of the end. The victorious Mussalmans had halted on the field of battle for rest and refreshment, but now they had reached the capital, and from that time forward for a space of five months Vijayanagar knew no rest. The enemy had come to destroy, and they carried out their object relentlessly. They slaughtered the people without mercy ; broke down the temples and palaces ; and wreaked such savage vengeance on the abode of the kings, that with the exception of a few great stone built temples and walls, nothing now remains but a heap of ruins to mark the spot where once the stately buildings stood. They demolished the statues, and even succeeded in breaking the limbs of the huge Narasimha monolith. Nothing seemed to escape them. They broke up the pavilions standing on the huge platform from which the kings used to watch the festivals, and overthrew all the carved work. They lit huge fires in the magnificently decorated buildings forming the temple of Vitthalaswami near the river, and smashed its exquisite stone sculptures. With fire and sword, with crowbars and axes they carried on day after day their work of destruction. Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been wrought, and wrought so suddenly, on so splendid a city ; teeming with a wealthy and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day and on the next, seized, pillaged, and reduced to ruins, amid scenes of savage massacre and horrors begging description."

According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "The battle of Talikota is one of the most decisive battles in Indian history. It sounded the death-knell of the Hindu empire in the South, and produced a state of chaos, which invariably follows the collapse of a vast political organisation. The Portuguese trade was hampered, because the ruin of the empire destroyed the markets which imported and sold Portuguese goods. The Muslims rejoiced in the fall of their great rival, but it is doubtful whether they had achieved any substantial gains beyond a few slices of territory. The fear of the Vijayanagar empire had ever kept them alert and vigilant; under the perpetual stress of war they had never neglected the efficiency of their armies, but when this fear ceased to exist, they quarrelled amongst themselves, and their mutual jealousies and dissensions so disabled them that they fell an easy prey to the Mughal Emperors of the North. There is no more striking example of Nemesis in medieval Indian history." (*Medieval India*, p. 451.)

It cannot be denied that Rama Raya, in spite of his failure, was a great man. Although he was 90 years of age, he still possessed the energy and vigour of youth. It goes to his credit that he personally supervised the military operations in the battlefield. If he failed, that was partly due to the preparations made by his enemies. Rama Raya might have been successful if he had not underrated his enemies.

### After Talikota

It is true that the battle of Talikota did a great damage to the Vijayanagar empire but it is not correct to say that the Hindu empire disappeared completely after 1565. It has rightly been contended that Talikota was the climacteric, but not the grand climacteric of the Vijayanagar empire. The empire continued to exist till it got weakened and dismembered—weakened by the constant invasions from the north and dismembered by the dissatisfaction and rebellions of the viceroys within.

It is to be observed that the Muslim confederacy which had won the battle of Talikota did not last long. The old imperial jealousies reappeared among the Muslim Sultans. The result was that the Vijayanagar empire was able to recover once again under the guidance of Tirumala, brother of Rama Raya. After the departure of the Muslims, he went back to Vijayanagar. After some time, he went to Renugonda and restored the prestige of Vijayanagar empire to such an extent that he was able to interfere once again in the affairs of the Muslim States in the Deccan. Up to 1570, Sadasiva was the nominal ruler but in that year he was set aside by Tirumala who captured the throne for himself. With Tirumala started the role of the **Aravidu dynasty** in Vijayanagar. Tirumala was succeeded by his son, **Ranga II**. He was a successful ruler. He was succeeded by **Venkata II** who ruled from 1586 to 1614. He was the last great ruler of Vijayanagar who kept the empire intact. The only exception was that in 1612 Raja Oedyar founded the State of Mysore. After the death of Venkata II, the dismemberment of the empire started. There was



a war of succession. **Ranga III** could not check the disintegrating forces on account of the selfishness of the rebellious vassals of the empire. The feudatories of the Vijayanagar empire proved to be the worst enemies of the empire. Their insane pride, blind selfishness, disloyalty and mutual dissensions helped the Muslim State in their fight against Vijayanagar. Moreover, the chiefs of Seringapatam and Bednur and Naiks of Madura and Tanjore were able to set up independent kingdoms of their own. It was under these circumstances that the Vijayanagar empire disappeared.

### Administration of Vijayanagar

The rulers of the Vijayanagar empire were able to set up a very efficient system of administration. It is not correct to say that the administration of the Vijayanagar empire "contained no principle of development, represented no ideal of human progress and therefore could not be lasting". The truth is that the rulers of Vijayanagar continued to organise the administration as demanded by the circumstances.

### King

The king of the Vijayanagar empire was the fountain-head of all power in the State. He was the supreme authority in civil, military and judicial matters. This does not mean that he was a tyrant or an irresponsible despot. He was required to rule according to **Dharma**. He was required to keep in view the good-will and welfare of the people. He was required to bring peace and plenty to the kingdom. The ideal of kingship was given by Krishna Deva Raya in his **Amuktamalyada**. According to him, a crowned king should always rule with an eye towards **Dharma**. "A king should rule collecting round him people skilled in statecraft, should investigate the mines yielding precious metals in his kingdom and extract the same, should levy taxes from his people moderately, should counteract the acts of his enemies by crushing them with force, should be friendly, should protect one and all of his subjects, should put an end to the mixing up of the caste among them, should always try to increase the merit of the Brahmins, should strengthen his fortress and lessen the growth of the undesirable things and should be ever mindful of the purification of his cities".

### Ministers

The Vijayanagar empire was a vast feudal organisation and the king was at the head of the whole system. He was helped in his work by a council which consisted of ministers, provincial governors, military commanders, men of priestly class and poets. The members of the council were not elected but were nominated by the king. The ministers were taken not only from the Brahmins but also from the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The office of a minister was sometimes hereditary and sometimes not. It is not possible to ascertain the exact number of ministers. The important officers of the State were the Prime Minister, Chief Treasurer,



Control of the levels and the Prefect of the Palace. The Prime Minister advised the king in all important matters. The Prefect was for the Palace and his duty was to maintain law and order. Nuniz tells us that the Prefect of Palace was required to give an account of the revenues to the emperor and that he used their money. There was extensive commerce. No wonder it could not be kept without foreign buyers and many others. It appears that there was a tax levied to be something wrong.

### The Court

The rulers of Vijayanagar had formed a magnificent court and were a great power for that time. The court was attended by scholars, poets, artists, astrologers and musicians. Festivals were celebrated with great pomp and show. Nicolo Conti refers to the festivals in particular. The festival of Mahanavami lasted for four days. According to Abur Razaq, 'The king of Vijayanagar ordered that the nobles and chiefs should assemble at the court, whence from all the provinces of his country, which extends for the distance of three or four months' journey. They brought with them a thousand elephants tumultuous as the sea, and the king as the clouds arrayed in armour and adorned with gold. On each side of the king, officers and throwers of naphtha were seated; and the elephants' trunks and ears of the elephants extraordinarily long and pictures were traced with cinnabar and other fine dyes.'

Abur Razaq refers to the hospitality of the rulers of Vijayanagar towards the Muslim plenipotenentiaries in these words: 'One day the officers came from the king to summon me, and towards the evening I went to the Court, and presented five beautiful horses and two trays each containing nine pieces of damask and silk. The king was seated in great state in the forty pillared hall, and a great crowd of Brahmans and others stood on the right and left of him. He was clothed in a robe of **zaitun** satin, and he had round his neck a collar composed of pure pearls of great excellence, the value of which a jeweller would find it difficult to meditate. He was of an olive colour, of a spare body, and rather old. He was exceedingly young, for there was only some slight down his cheeks, and none upon his chin. His whole appearance was very prepossessing. On being presented to him, I bowed my head. He received me kindly, and seated me near him, and, taking the august letter of the emperor, made it over (to the interpreters), and said, "My heart is exceedingly glad that the great king has sent an ambassador to me." As I was in profuse perspiration from the excessive heat and the quantity of clothes which I had on me, the monarch took compassion on me, and favoured me with a fan of Khatai which he held in his hand. They then brought a tray, and gave me two packets of betel, a purse containing 500 **fanams**, and about 20 miskals of camphor, and, obtaining leave to depart, I returned to my lodging. The daily provision forwarded to me comprised two sheep, four couple of fowls, five **mans** of rice, one **man** of butter, one **man** of sugar, and

caravanas in gold. This occurred every day. Twice a week I was summoned to the presence towards the evening when the king would sit on a throne to receive the Khavans, and I would take a hundred a piece of betel, a purse of fanams and some miskals of camphor."

### Provincial Government

The Vijayanagar empire was divided into many provinces for purposes of administration. The terms used for the provinces are *Rajya*, *Mandala* and *Chavath*. The provinces were also divided into sub-divisions like *Venthe*, *Nadu*, *Sima*, *Village* and *Sthala* in the later portion. *Venthe* was a territorial division higher than a *Nadu*. A *Nadu* was a territorial division higher than a *Village*. *Kottam* was a territorial division higher than a *Parra* which again was higher than a *Nadu*. *Sthala* was a portion of a land comprising several fields. It is not possible to state the exact number of the provinces into which the empire was divided. Relying on the statement of Domingos Paes, some writers have come to the conclusion that there were 200 provinces in the empire. However, this is not correct. Paes confused the tributary vassals with the provincial governors. The view of H. Krishna Shastri is that the Vijayanagar empire was divided into six principal provinces. Each province was under a viceroy or *Nayaka* or *Naiik*. The latter was either a member of the royal house or an influential noble of the state or some descendant of some old ruling family. Every Governor exercised civil, military and judicial powers within his jurisdiction. However, he was required to submit regularly his account of the income and expenditure of his charge to the Central Government. He was also to help the Central Government with the military whenever required. If the Governor oppressed the people or became a traitor, he was likely to be punished by the king. His *Jagir* could be confiscated if he did not send one-third of his income to the Central Government. Although controlled by the king in many ways, the Governors enjoyed a lot of autonomy within their jurisdiction and were responsible for creating a lot of trouble in the South after the break-up of the Vijayanagar empire.

The village was the unit of administration. Each village was self-sufficient. The village assembly was responsible for the administration of the village. Its hereditary officers were the village accountant, village watchman, the superintendent of forced labour etc. These officers were paid either by grants of land or from a portion of the agricultural produce. The heads of corporations seem "to have formed an integral part of the village assemblies." The king had his control over villages through an officer called *Mahanayakacharya*.

### Sources of Income

The main source of income of Vijayanagar empire was land revenue and its administration was under a department called

**Athavane.** Land was divided into three parts for purposes of assessment: wet land, dry land, orchards and woods. Under the Hindu law, the share of the state was one-sixth of the produce but it appears that the same was increased in order to meet the heavy burdens of the State. According to Nuniz, "All land belongs to the king and from his hand the captain holds it. They make it over to husband-men who pay nine tenths of the produce to their lords, who, in their turn, pay one-half to the king." It is contended that the statement of Nuniz cannot be accepted as true as it was impossible for the peasantry to live on one-tenth of the produce of their labour. In addition to land revenue, the peasants were required to pay other taxes such as grazing tax, marriage tax etc. The state got its income from customs duties, tolls on roads, revenue from gardening and plantations and taxes from manufacturers, craftsmen, potters, washermen, mendicants, barbers, shoemakers and prostitutes. Abdur Razzaq tells us that the income from the prostitutes was 12,000 **Fanams** which was devoted to the maintenance of policemen attached to the office of the Prefect of the city. The people were required to pay a number of duties on articles of ordinary consumption such as grains, fruits, vegetables, fats etc. Only one road led to the city and it was controlled by a gate. The right of collecting the duties was given to the highest bidder. According to Nuniz, "The gate is rented out for 12,000 **Pardaos** each year and no one can enter it without paying just what the rentees ask, country folks as well as strangers.....everyday enter by these gates 2,000 oxen, and every one of these pays three **Vintees**, except certain polled oxen without horns, which never pay anything in any part of the realm."

The people were allowed to pay taxes in cash or in kind. As the incidence of taxation was heavy, a lot of oppression must have been practised on the people. It appears that the people were given some relief in the form of reduction or remission of taxes if they made complaints about it or appealed directly to the king.

### Justice

As regards justice, the king was the supreme court of justice. In all important cases, his word was final. Petitions were presented to the king or the Prime Minister by all those who had a grievance and those were disposed of according to merits. According to Abdur Razzaq, "On the left side of the Sultan's portico rises the Diwan Khana, which is extremely large and looks like a palace..... In the middle of this palace, upon a high estrade, is seated a eunuch called the Daing, who alone presides over the diwan. At the end of the hall stand the chobdars (hussars) drawn up in a line. Every man who comes upon any business passes between the chobdars, offers a small present, prostrates himself with his face to the ground, then rising up explains the business which brought him there, and the Daing pronounces his opinion according to the principles of justice adopted in this kingdom, and no one thereafter is allowed to make any appeal."

Civil cases were decided according to the principles of Hindu

law and the usage of the country. Documents were attested by witnesses. People were fined for breaches of civil law. The administration of criminal law was harsh. Torture was allowed to find out the truth. Theft, adultery and treason were punished with death or mutilation. Sometimes a culprit was thrown before elephants who tore him to pieces. According to Nuniz, "Nobles who became traitors are sent to be impaled alive on a wooden stake thrust through the belly and people of lower orders, for whatever crime they commit, he forthwith commands to cut off their heads in the market-place and the same for a murder, unless the death was result of a duel." The following royal decree refers to the power of the **Nayaks** or **Guadas** to dispose of cases: "The rulers of the towns, the **Nayaks** and the **Gaudas**, will see to this. If a caste dispute arises in the country, they will summon the parties before them and advise. And as they have the power of punishment, the parties must act according to the advice given. This proceeding is to be free of cost."

### The Army

The military organisation of Vijayanagar empire was under a department called **Kandachara** and its head was **Dandanayaka** or **Dannayaka** or Commander-in-Chief. The military organisation was of a feudal nature. The king had an army of his own but in addition to that, the provincial governors were required to send their contingents in times of emergency. Nuniz tells us that the rulers of Vijayanagar could recruit as many soldiers as they pleased with the money at their disposal. It is not possible to give an exact estimate of the numerical strength of the army of the rulers of Vijayanagar. According to Paes, Krishna Deva Raya put into the battlefield in 1520, an army consisting of 7,03,000 foot, 32,600 horsemen and 551 elephants. In addition to that, there were a large number of camp followers, sappers etc. It appears that there is some exaggeration in the number given. The army consisted of the infantry, cavalry, artillery and camels. The Vijayanagar army was inferior in strength, patience and endurance to the Muslim armies. A lot of reliance was put on elephants who were practically useless in the face of archers and artillerymen.

The rulers of Vijayanagar were the followers of Vishnu but they followed a policy of religious toleration towards all. According to Edoardo Barbosa, "The king allows such freedom that every man may come and go and live according to his own creed without suffering any annoyance and without inquiry whether he is a Christian, a Jew, a Moor or a Hindu."

Critics point out that the provincial Governors under the Vijayanagar empire were given a lot of autonomy and that was responsible for the weakening of the central authority and the ultimate disintegration of the empire. It is also pointed out that the Vijayanagar empire failed to develop a sustained commercial activity. According to Dr. Aiyangar, "This failure proved a vital defect in the imperial careers of Vijayanagar and made a permanent Hindu empire impossible." The rulers of Vijayanagar also made a mistake



in giving concessions to the Portuguese. By doing so, they sacrificed the stability of the empire for the sake of profit. Nothing was done to curb the individualistic tendency of the people and consequently it was impossible to set up a stable empire. Too much emphasis was not put on military organisation and consequently the rulers of Vijayanagar could not smash their rivals.

## Art

As regards the art of Vijayanagar empire, many temples of remarkable beauty were constructed during this period. According to Fergusson, the Hazara temple is "one of the most perfect specimens of Hindu temple architecture in existence". According to Fergusson, the Vitthal-swami temple "shows the extreme limit in florid magnificence to which the style advanced." The art of painting was patronised and it reached a high degree of excellence. Music also made progress and some books on the subject were written. Theatre was also encouraged.

## Literature

Literature also made progress in the Vijayanagar empire. Its rulers were patrons of all languages, *viz.*, Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada. Krishna Deva Raya was not only a scholar himself but he also patronised other scholars. Other kings also patronised scholars and poets. It has rightly been stated that the reign of Krishna Deva Raya marked "the dawn of a new era in the literary history of South India". Himself a scholar, a musician and poet, he loved to gather around him poets, philosophers, and religious teachers whom he honoured with munificent gifts of land and money." He himself wrote a book in Telugu called **Amuktamalyada**. In the introduction to that book, it is stated that the king had written five other books in Sanskrit. It is pointed out that there were eight big giants in his court. Peddana was his poet-laureate.

Madhava Vidyaranya and Sayana flourished in the beginning of the Vijayanagar empire. They are well-known for their learning even in modern times. Savana wrote his famous commentaries on the Vedas and Madhava was "the supreme light incarnate".

The rulers of the Aravidu dynasty also patronised poets and religious teachers. Telugu literature flourished under them with "reinforced vigour". There were authors among the petty chiefs and relatives of the emperors. The rulers of Vijayanagar encouraged people to write on music, dancing, drama, grammar, logic and philosophy. It has rightly been stated that the Vijayanagar empire was "a synthesis of South Indian culture".

## Social Condition

A study of the relevant material shows that women occupied a high position in society. They took part in the political, social and literary life of the country. According to Nuniz, "He (king) has also women who wrestle and others who are astrologers and soothsayers; and he has women who write all the accounts of ex-

penes that are mounted inside the gates, and others whose duty it is to write all the affairs of the kingdom and compare their books with those of writers outside; he has women also for music who play instruments and sing. Even the wives of the king are well-versed in music.... It is said that he has judges, as well as bailiffs and waiters, who every night guard the palace and these are women." Men were allowed to marry more than one wife. This was particularly so among the rich. Child marriage was common. Big dowries were demanded at the time of marriage. The practice of Sati was common and was sanctioned by the Brahmans.

Abdur Razzaq refers to the existence of brothels in the city where women of loose character lived. To quote him, "One thing worth mentioning is this, behind the mint there is a sort of bazar, which is more than 300 yards long and 20 yards broad. On two sides of it there are houses (khanaha) and fore-courts (sakhaha), and in front of the houses, instead of benches (kursi), lofty seats are built of excellent stone, and on each side of the avenue formed by the houses, there are figures of lions, panthers, tigers, and other animals, so well painted as to seem alive. After the time of mid-day prayer they place at the doors of these houses, which are beautifully decorated, chairs and settees on which the courtezans seat themselves. Everyone is covered with pearls, precious stones and costly garments. Any man who passes through this place makes choice of whom he will. The servants of those brothels take care of whatever is taken into them, and if anything is lost, they are dismissed. There are several brothels within these seven fortresses, and the revenues of them, which, as stated before, amount to 12,000 fanams, go to pay the wages of the policemen. The business of these men is to acquaint themselves with all the events and accidents that happen within the seven walls, and to recover everything that is lost, or that may be abstracted by theft; otherwise they are fined."

### **Brahmans**

The Brahmans were held in high esteem by the rulers of Vijayanagar and no wonder they had a lot of influence in the social, religious and political fields. Nuniz describes the Brahmans as "honest men, given to merchandise, very acute and of much talent, very good at accounts, lean men and well formed, but little fit for hard work."

### **Food**

There were no restrictions in matters of food. People took fruits, vegetables, oil and meat of all kinds except that of oxen or cows. According to Nuniz, "These kings of Bismaga eat all sorts of things, but not the flesh of oxen or cows, which they never kill in all the country of the heathen, because they worship them. They eat mutton, pork, venison, partridges, hares, doves, quails, and all kinds of birds; even sparrows, and rats, and cats, and lizards, all of which are sold in the market of the city of Bismaga."

"Everything has to be sold alive so that each may know what he buys — this at least so far as concerns game — and there are fish from the rivers in large quantities."

Dr. V. A. Smith is of the opinion that this was "a curious dietary for princes and people, who in the time of Krishna Deva Raya and Achyuta Raya were zealous Hindus with special devotion to certain forms of Vishnu."

Bloody sacrifices were performed in the Vijayanagar empire. According to Paes, on a certain festival, the king used to witness the slaughter of 24 buffaloes and 150 sheep. When the Mahanavami festival was over, 250 buffaloes and 4,500 sheep were killed on the last day.

### **Economic Condition**

The empire of Vijayanagar was very rich. The foreign travellers who visited the Vijayanagar empire have paid tributes to its wealth and splendour. According to Nicolo Conti, "The circumference of the City (Vijayanagar) is 60 miles; its walls are carried up to the mountains and enclose the valley at their foot, so that its extent is thereby increased. In the city there are estimated to be 99,000 men fit to bear arms. The king is more powerful than all the other kings of India." According to Abdur Razzaq, "The country is so well populated that it is impossible in a reasonable space to convey an idea of it. In the king's treasury there are chambers with excavations for them, filled with molten gold forming one mass. All the inhabitants of the country, whether high or low, even down to the artificers of the Bazar, wore jewels and gift ornaments in their ears and around their necks, arms, wrists and fingers." According to Paes, the king of Vijayanagar had a lot of money. The residents of the city of Vijayanagar carried on trade in precious stones. Things were in plenty and also cheap. Barbosa refers to Vijayanagar as "of great extent, highly populous and the seat of an active commerce in country diamonds, rubies from Pegu, silks of China and Alexandria, and cinnabar, camphor, musk, pepper and sandal from Malabar."

The prosperity of the Vijayanagar empire was due to the growth of agriculture, industries, trade and commerce. The state followed a wise irrigation policy. Industries were also encouraged by the state. Commerce was inland, coastal and overseas. Calicut was the most important port on the Malabar coast. If Abdur Razzaq is to be believed, there were as many as 300 sea-ports in the Vijayanagar empire. There were commercial relations with the islands in the Indian Ocean, the Malaya Archipelago, Burma, China, Arabia, Persia, South Africa, Abyssinia and Portugal. The exports from the Vijayanagar empire were cloth, rice, iron, salt petre, sugar and spices. The imports were horses, elephants, pearls, copper, coral, mercury, China silk and velvet. Edoardo Barbosa tells us that South India got its ships built in the Maldiv Islands. The art of ship-building was well-known.

The coins of the empire were those of gold, copper and silver. There were emblems of different gods and animals on them.

We may conclude by saying that the Vijayanagar empire "served a high historical purpose by acting as a champion Hindu of

religion and culture against the aggressions of the Muslims in Southern India."

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## CHAPTER XV

# Administrative System of the Delhi Sultanate

### Theocracy

The political theory of the Islamic State is based on the religious law of Islam according to which the ultimate authority and the supreme head of the State is God himself who rules the worldly kingdom through the Caliph, Sultan or Padshah. The latter are merely the deputies of God and have no independent position. They are subject to the will of God as expressed in the law. However, subject to these limitations, they can do whatever they like. It is true that all Muslim rulers had in theory the right to interpret the law but actually they had to depend upon the leading theologians for its interpretation. Thus, the Muslim state was undoubtedly a theocracy. This basis of the Muslim state was never discarded by the Sultans of Delhi and hence the Delhi Sultanate continued to be a theocracy. The fact that the law of Islam as propounded by the four schools of jurisprudence, did not suffice to cover all the new situations and problems arising in the Muslim States, did not affect the basic character of the State. It is true that the Sultans admitted that the Muslim law was not able to guide them in every sphere and consequently they had to depart from the law in certain cases, but that was only in matters of detail and did not affect the basic concept that the Islamic state was an organised agency founded by God Himself to propagate Islam through the instrumentality of the earthly rulers.

The Sultanate of Delhi was a theocracy. The Sultan was the Caesar and Pope combined in one. It is not correct to say that there was a secular state at that time. Islam was the religion of the state and no other religion was recognised. All the sources of the state were meant for the protection and spread of Islam. Dr. Qureshi is of the opinion that the Sultanate of Delhi was not a theocracy because of the rule of the ordained priesthood which was an essential feature of theocracy, was absent. This view ignores the fact that under the Sultanate of Delhi the canon law was supreme and the civil law was subordinate to it. It is true that Ulemas in India were not ordained and hereditary but it cannot be denied that they exercised great influence on the affairs of the state and they

saw to it that the Quranic law was applied by the rulers of the country. The ideal of a Sultan was to convert all the people to Islam and thus turn Dar-ul-Harb or infidel land into Dar-ul-Islam or Muslim lands. As a matter of fact, all kinds of facilities were given to the people to become Muslims. If in spite of this the whole of India was not converted to Islam, that was partly due to practical difficulties.

According to Dr. Habibullah, "The chronicles tend to give us an impression that the Sultanate was a truly Islamic state, constantly striving to make its policy conformable to the **shariah**. That it was scarcely so in actual practice, will have been gathered from the last few chapters. We have noticed the un-Islamic character of the kingship: Barani admits that '**duniyadari**', of which kingship is the highest perfection, is absolutely opposed to '**dindari**'. After tracing the process by which the pagan institution of monarchy had crept into Islam, he concludes that sovereignty is never possible without practising non-Islamic customs. Conscientious ecclesiastics might delude themselves that the Sultan really existed for protecting the faith and upholding the **shariah**; but it requires little stressing that the decisive factor in his actions was the law of force and expediency. In summing up his account of the origin and nature of kingship, Barani remarks, the meaning of kingship is power **istila**, whether obtained by lawful means or by force; even the older pagan law of dynastic legitimacy finds no place in the present kingship.' The **shariah**, in ordinary practice, was no more respected than any other law. Barani admits that capital punishment of Muslims which, he adds, was contrary to the Sacred Law, was necessary for the exigencies of better government. Similarly, the law of inheritance, the strict distinction between **halal** and **haram**, and many other well-known injunctions were violated; the ecclesiastics protested but were constrained to find excuse. The well-known prohibition of the **shariah** regarding the taking and giving of interest on monetary transaction was openly disregarded; Amir Khusrau mentions the rate of interest at one **jital** per month for the principal sum of one **tanka** which, when agreed upon by the parties on a written bond, had a legal sanction and was enforced by the **qazi**. Of the four conditions which Barani advises the king to bear in mind when issuing decrees (**zabitan**), one is that if any of the proposed ordinances is found contrary to the **shariah**, it need not be withdrawn but, as an evil necessity is to be retained not longer than is necessary.

"Even the majority of the **ulema**, the guardians of the sacred law, was utterly materialistic in outlook and opportunist in conduct. They entered into an unholy alliance with the secular authorities and by distorting the rules of the **shariah**, found sanction for the Sultan's pagan practices. Even traditions from the Prophet were concocted to give the king's despotism a moral backing. They held out that the Sultan's office was only slightly inferior to that of the Prophet and his sanctity almost equal to that of God. To suit the Sultan's convenience his religious duties were sought to be confined to such matters as leading the prayers, making endowment

for the **ulema** and religious establishments and dispensing justice, while the most flagrant breaches of the **shariah** rules like drinking, non-observance of the fast etc. were condoned. The **ulema** even authorised him to appropriate the people's wealth whenever he desired" (*The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, pp 348-50.)

### Administrative Organisation

The administrative organisation of the Delhi Sultanate was a product of many factors. The Sultans of Delhi had before themselves the model of the government of the Caliph. They had also inherited some of the practices and conventions of the race to which they belonged. They also found in India a well-established administrative system from which they could borrow. The result was that the Sultans had to assimilate most of the machinery of government already existing in the country. Thus, the Government of the Sultans of Delhi has rightly been described as a **Turko-Persian system in an Indian setting**.

The foreign elements in the Sultanate consisted of the Central Ministry, their military system and modifications of the taxation policy as well as tax structure of the country to some extent by the enhancement of the rate of land revenue and by the addition of certain new taxes such as Jizya, pilgrimage tax, heavier duties on Hindus and other non-Muslims than on the Muslim merchants. All non-Muslims were deprived of the status of citizenship and they were accepted merely as *Zimmis*. They had to obtain their security of life and property by payment of a money consideration and their rights to perform their religious duties by payment of religious taxes. Moreover, all higher positions carrying large powers as well as emoluments were reserved for Muslims only. There was no opening for the Hindus. While the outer framework of the administrative machinery, particularly in the lower rungs of the hierarchy, would seem to have been built on the earlier pattern, the spirit and policy of the Turkish Government was basically transformed. There is no merit or substance in the contention of some writers that the Delhi Sultanate was a democracy. This claim is refuted by the simple fact that the Hindus who formed a majority of the population, had absolutely no say in the administration of the country.

### The Khalifa

It is true that the Caliph or the Khalifa was the king of all the Muslims in all parts of the world but with the spread of Islam in various parts of the world it became practically impossible to enforce the authority of the Khalifa everywhere. However, the fiction of the unity of the Khalifa was maintained. This was continued in spite of the fact that the last Khalifa was put to death by Hulagu Khan, the Mongol leader. What was actually done was that the Sultans of Delhi described themselves as the Deputy or Assistant of the Khalifa. They received investiture from the Khalifa and inscribed his name on their coins and also got the *Khutba* read in the name of the Khalifa. Ala-ud-Din Khilji refused to recognise the authority of the Khalifa and Qutub-ud-Din Mubarak himself took

up the title of the Caliph. Excepting these two rulers, the other Sultans of Delhi recognised the nominal authority of the Khalifa.<sup>1</sup> However, actually no Sultan of Delhi bothered to obey the Khalifa. No Sultan believed that he got his authority from the Khalifa. Sultans of Delhi considered it more profitable to maintain their contacts with the outside Muslim world and no wonder they recognised the nominal authority of the Khalifa.

### The Sultan

The Sultan was the head of the Delhi Sultanate. He was the source of all power and authority. He was the sovereign head and commander of the army. His will was law. It was the duty of every one to obey his command. Generally, the form of an election was maintained by the Sultans of Delhi. The nobles and the landlords and the most influential Ulema at the capital agreed upon a candidate and declared him as the Sultan. Afterwards, a formal oath of allegiance was taken by them and later on by the people. It cannot be denied that the procedure of election was merely a fiction. The candidate had already decided the issue by conquest in battle and by overwhelming force. Of course, it has the advantage of being legal and conforming to the wishes of the jurists and the people. It is true that an attempt was made to make the choice from the ruling family but the hereditary principle was not always followed. Although Jalal-ud-Din Khalji had already seated himself on the throne, the outward form of election was maintained. Many people did not take the oath of allegiance to the Khaljis for some time but they did so after some time.

The majority of the jurists believe that the Sultan could be deposed if he failed to carry out his trust. Injustice was considered to be a sufficient cause for dethronement. All writers agree that a man suffering from a mental or physical infirmity could not continue to be a sovereign. Great importance was attached to the loss of power of judgment and eye-sight. The very fact that a large number of Delhi Sultans were removed from the throne shows that they were not considered to be sacrosanct. It is true that there were intrigues and rebellions even against competent rulers but those had not much chances of success.

The Sultan was required to be a person capable of dealing with the problems of the state. He was to be in full possession of physical and mental faculties. Ordinarily, the ruler was expected to be a

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1. According to Dr. A. C. Banerjee, "The Khalifats lost political power, but they did not forfeit their spiritual prestige. No true believer could ever forget that it was to the successor of the Prophet that his allegiance was due. 'He was the fountain-head of the political authority; kings and tribal chiefs were in theory subordinate to him, and his sanction alone could provide a legal basis for their power. The maddest of political adventurers would think many times before he directly defied the Caliph's authority'. This is why the Mamluk Sultans of Egypt had considered it necessary to consecrate their authority with the sanction of the titular chief of the Islamic world and this is why the ruler of the all-conquering Ottoman Turks resorted to a legal fiction of doubtful validity in order to assume the position of the Khalifah." (*Medieval Studies*, p. 103.)



male and no wonder the election of Sultana Razia created a lot of trouble.

It is true that the absence of a hereditary principle of succession had its defects but it enabled a large number of brilliant men to be the rulers of Delhi. It was not an easy thing to occupy the throne of Delhi and no wonder fools and pleasure-seekers could not afford to remain long on the throne. The Delhi Sultanate required all the care and work that a man could give. The rough and ready method of selecting the Sultan worked well and the right man was found at the right time.

It is true that the Sultan was recognised as the supreme interpreter of the law but actually he could not go against the recognised interpretation. It was not possible for him to disregard Ijma or preponderant concurrence of opinion on any point. Where the jurists disagreed, the Sultan could make his own decision but while doing so he was to get the advice of the learned jurists. The Sultan was expected not to contravene the **Sharia** while making laws. The sovereignty of law was not merely a legal fiction. The Sultans of Delhi showed remarkable respect for the **Sharia** in their public dealings. It is true that there were certain violations but in many cases even the mighty Sultans humbled themselves before the majesty of the law.

The Sultans enjoyed great prestige. They were considered to be the heart of the system. Their existence was the primary necessity of social life. Without a ruler, all order was to vanish and the very existence of the human race could be endangered. It was his sword which cleansed the world of anarchy and of evil. A just Sultan could expect to find a place under the banner of the Prophet on the day of reckoning. It was the duty of the Sultan to give full protection to the people to develop themselves.

The Sultan was expected to protect Islam. He was to settle disputes among his subjects. He was required to defend the territories of Islam and keep the highway and roads safe for travellers. He was to maintain and enforce the criminal code. He was to strengthen the frontiers of Muslim territory against possible aggression. He was to wage a holy war against those who acted in hostility to Islam. He was to collect rates and taxes. He was to apportion the shares of those who deserved an allowance from the public treasury. He was to appoint officers to help him in his public and legal duties. He was required to keep in touch with public affairs and the condition of the people by personal contact. "The Sultan controls affairs, maintains rights and enforces the criminal code; he is the Pole Star around which revolve the affairs of the world and the Faith; he is the protection of God in his realm; his shadow extends its canopy over his servants, for he forbids the forbidden, helps the oppressed, uproots the oppressor and gives security to the timid."

It is not proper to contend that the Sultan was absolutely a despot and there was no limitation on his power. However, in actual

practice absolute authority exists only in the dream of the despot. All political power is limited and depends on the co-operation of strong elements in the state.

According to Dr. A.C. Banerjee, "It is altogether impossible to discover in any intelligible principle the source of the power which the Sultans of Delhi enjoyed for three centuries. They did not owe their position to the Khalifas, the nominal rulers of the Islamic world, although some of them did invoke their authority in their support. Nor did they owe their sovereignty to the will of the people. At the first instance, their sole right to rule this country was that of military conquest. But they failed to evolve any workable law of succession, or any tolerable method to secure dynastic continuity. Sons did not always succeed their fathers. The nomination of the dying ruler was unceremoniously set aside by the over-mighty nobles, but even the nobles did not have the decisive voice in selecting the ruler. The principle—if it is a principle at all—to which candidates appealed was that of force; and nothing but might was right." (*Medieval Studies*, pp. 107-08.)

There was a sort of compact between the Sultans and the Ulema by which the Ulema were to interpret the Quran in favour of the authority of the Sultan and the latter was not only to give high offices to the Ulema but also make endowments to the Muslim institutions and Muslim causes. The result was that the Ulema became a political force which could not be ignored by the Sultans.

The Sultans were primarily military adventurers and they did not care much for the niceties of political and religious thought. They welcomed thinkers, writers and poets to their courts so long as they did not interfere with the work of the state and if they did so, they were liable to be exterminated. Such a fate was met by Barani as he complained that the Sultans were not giving due attention to their office. The checks on the authority of the Sultans were the Ulema, the nobility and the soldiers of the standing army.

### **The Nobles**

A very effective check was put on the power of the king by the nobles. No Sultan could afford to offend the powerful nobles without endangering his own position. Some of these nobles were the heads of clans and consequently had a permanent following. It was not easy to impose the royal will on them. They considered themselves to be the equals of the Sultan and capable of founding royal dynasties themselves. Their relationship with the Sultan varied according to the character and capability of the Sultan. The only ideal that held the nobles together was the service of Islam. It was realised that a faith without a state was futile and a state without a faith was without any guidance. It is these feelings which kept the nobles together and they obeyed the Sultan so long as they felt that he was performing his duties. If he was found to be incapable the nobles did not hesitate to revolt against him. It must not be forgotten that the nobles very often did what was advantageous to them.

## The Ministers

There is an Arab adage that "The bravest of men require arms and the wisest of kings need ministers" and the same was true of the Delhi Sultans. During the rule of the so-called Slave dynasty, there were four ministers, viz., the Wazir, the Ariz-i-Mamalik, the Dewan-i-Insha and the Diwan-i-Rasalat. Sometimes, the Naib or Naib-i-Mamalik was also appointed. He exercised great authority particularly when the Sultan was weak. Ordinarily, he was inferior to the Wazir. It was later on that the offices of the Sadr-us-Sudur and Diwan-i-Qaza were raised to the status of ministers. Thus, there were 6 ministers under the Delhi Sultanate. The Comptroller of the Royal household was not technically a minister but he exercised greater powers than a minister did.

The Delhi Sultans were surrounded by the wisest and most experienced men in the realm. They had wonderful opportunities of seeking advice and counsel and keeping in touch with public opinion. The ministers were just the servants of the Sultan and responsible to him alone. However, this does not mean that a minister had no real authority. The position and powers of a minister were well-defined by law and sanctified by tradition.

### Wazir

The chief minister was called the **Wazir** and great importance was attached to this post. The Wazir stood mid-way between the sovereign and his subjects. He was considered to be a partaker in sovereignty. It was recognised that no empire could be stable or prosperous without a Wazir. "Sovereignty and dominion could not attain the pinnacle of their height without the help and co-operation of a Wazir, whose wise deliberations would result in promoting the welfare of the country and the prosperity of the people."

In the Sultanate of Delhi, there were two types of Wazirs. Most of them possessed special and limited powers. A few of them enjoyed unlimited authority and ruled the empire in the name of the Sultan. Some Sultans were too much under the control of the Wazir who practically usurped all power.

The functions of the Wazir have been given in the following passage: "The kings know well how to lead expeditions, conquer countries, give rewards and shine in the assembly or the battlefield; but it is in the domain of the Wazir to make a country prosperous, to accumulate treasure, to appoint officials, to ask for accounts, and to arrange the stock-taking of the commodities in the **Karkhanahs** and the census of the horses, camels, mules and other animals, to assemble and pay the troops and artisans, to keep the people satisfied, to look after the men of piety and fame and to give them stipends, to take care of the widows and the orphans, to provide for the learned, to administer the affairs of the people, to organise the offices and look after their efficiency; in short, to transact the business of the state." The Wazir was the head of the entire machinery of the government. Although his immediate concern was the central finance office, he was

also responsible for other offices at the headquarters. He appointed and superintended the civil servants. He organised the agency for the collection of revenue. He exercised complete control over the various channels of expenditure. His assistants examined the accounts submitted by the various departments of the Government. The various statements were compared, checked and passed in his office. It was his duty to recover the money illegally spent by the local officials. All the requirements of the military department were referred to him for his final approval. It was his office which kept accounts, disbursed salaries and allotted assignments. It was his department which paid stipends to scholars and men of learning and also gave doles to the poor and needy. Every subject from the Governor to the peasant had dealing with him or his assistants.

The Sultans always supported their Wazirs in enforcing discipline. There was always co-operation between the Sultan and the Wazir. There was always the possibility of the interested parties poisoning the mind of the Sultan against the Wazir and wise Wazirs always guarded against that possibility. The Wazir was to conduct himself in such a way that he did not create too many enemies. Most of the Wazirs were men of culture and refined taste. The only exception was Khan Jahan Maqbul.

### **Diwan-i-Risalat**

There is a difference of opinion among scholars regarding the functions of Diwan-i-Risalat. The view of Dr. Qureshi is that he dealt with religious matters and was also incharge of the grant of stipends to scholars and pious men. However, the view of Dr. Habib Ullah is that he was a minister for foreign affairs and was in charge of diplomatic correspondence. Ambassadors and envoys were sent to and received from foreign rulers. It is pointed out that the view of Dr. Habib Ullah is preferable. The reason is that there was already an officer who was in charge of religious affairs, endowments and charity and he was known as Sadr-us-Sudur.

### **Sadr-us-Sudur**

Very often, the offices of Sadr-us-Sudur and Diwan-i-Qaza were held by one person. The Sadr-us Sudur was required to enforce Islamic rules and regulations. He was required to see that the Muslims observed those rules and regulations in their daily lives. He had in his charge a lot of money to give to Muslim divines, scholars and men of piety. The head of the Diwan-i-Qaza was the Qazi-i-Mumalik also known as Qazi-i-Quzat.

### **Diwan-i-Insha**

The Diwan-i-Insha dealt with royal correspondence. It has rightly been called "The treasury of secrets." That is due to the fact that **Dabir-i-Khas** who presided over this department, was also the confidential clerk of the state. The Dabir-i-Khas was assisted by a number of Dabirs who had established their reputation as masters of style. All correspondence between the sovereign and the rulers of other states or his own tributaries and officials passed through this



department. Every order from the Sultan was first drafted in this department and then taken to him for sanction after which it was copied, registered and then despatched.

### **Barid-i-Mumalik**

The Barid-i-Mumalik was the head of the state news agency. His duty was to keep himself informed of all that was happening in various parts of the empire. There was a local Barid at the headquarters of every administrative sub-division and it was his duty to send regularly news-letters to the Central Office. It is only men of honesty who were appointed to this post. If a Barid did not report a misdeed or some act of gross injustice committed by a well-placed official, he had sometimes to pay for his mistake with his life. There was nothing which was outside the sphere of the Barid. He was the confidential agent of the Central Government to report on every aspect of public administration. He was required to report on the Government officials, the financial position, the state of agriculture, purity of coinage etc. He was required to send his own impressions regarding the review of troops. He attended all important functions. He kept his informers everywhere and did not allow anything to escape. The Barid was paid well so that he may be above temptation.

### **Wakil-i-dar**

The Wakil-i-dar was the chief dignitary of the royal household. He controlled the entire household and supervised the payment of allowances and salaries to the personal staff of the Sultan. The royal kitchen, stables and even the children of the Sultan were under his control. All royal orders relating to the household were communicated through him. He reported all affairs requiring royal sanction. Everybody was required to approach the Sultan through him and consequently he exercised great influence and was considered in many respects to be the deputy of the Sultan. As he was always dealing with men of importance, he was required to be exceedingly tactful. Even his staff was selected very carefully. He had to keep the Sultan well-informed about the affairs of the state particularly because most of the important personages with whom he dealt, had direct access to the Sultan.

### **Diwan-i-Arz**

The Ariz-i-Mumalik was the head of the ministry of war called Diwan-i-Arz. He was responsible for maintaining the army in a state of efficiency. He acted as the chief recruiting officer and fixed the salary of each recruit. He inspected the troops at least once a year and examined the condition of the equipment of every trooper. The promotion of every soldier depended upon him. He kept Master rolls and revised the salaries at each annual review. His office was responsible for the recommendation of assignments to soldiers and the payment of the troops. Whenever a campaign was undertaken, the Ariz was in charge of all preparations. Although the general was nominated by the Sultan, the choice of the troops was generally left to him. In all important wars, he himself accom-

panied the army. He looked after supply and transport. After a victory, he supervised the collection of the booty which was divided in the presence of the Commander-in-chief. The Diwan-i-Arz was rightly called the "source of the livelihood of the fighters for the Faith."

### **Naib-ul-Mulk**

Under the Delhi Sultanate, a noble was generally selected as Naib-ul-Mulk or Lord Lieutenant of the realm. The actual authority varied with the character of the Sultan. Sometimes, it was merely an empty title, but at other times, the Naib-ul-Mulk was practically the absolute authority. He was the head of the military organisation and was entrusted with the Government of the centrally administered areas. A noble was selected to act as Naib-i-Ghaibat during the absence of the Sultan. He was the representative of the Sultan at the capital and dealt with all emergent and routine business.

### **Sar-i-Jandar**

The Sar-i-Jandar was attached to the Court. He commanded the king's bodyguard called Jandars. He was a salaried officer and a high noble. It appears that there were more than one Sar-i-Jandars at a time, possibly in command of different groups. His primary duty was to guard the person of the king. The Jandar formed an integral part of his retinue. A passage in the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* seems to suggest that the Sar-i-Jandar was also entrusted with the custody, punishment and execution of the prisoners of war and convicted criminals.

The other household dignitaries were **Amir-i-Akhur** (Master of Horse) with his Naib and the **Shahnah-i-Pilan** (Superintendent of Elephants). The **Amir-i-Shikar** was in charge of the hunting establishment of the king. He had a number of subordinates to look after different hunting animals and birds.

A kind of Advisory Council for the Sultan was formed by the Amir-i-Hajib, his Deputy, the Wazir, the Ariz, Wakil-i-dar and Kotwal of Delhi. However, there was no hard and fast rule as to its constitutional functions and much depended upon the whim of the Sultan. Non-officials were also normally consulted. The officials and the non-officials were together known as **Arkan-i-Daulat**. Bhugra Khan was specially instructed to follow the advice of these advisers. Kaiqubad was urged to refer all problems of Government to his Cabinet of four Ministers, composed of the Wazir, the Ariz and the Heads of the Diwan-i-Insha and Diwan-i-Risalat.

### **Finance**

The fiscal policy of the Sultanate period was based on the theory of finance of the Hanafi School of Sunni jurists. The Muslim state had two sources of revenue and those were religious and secular. The religious taxes could be demanded only from the Muslims and those were grouped under the name of **Zakat**. It was an act of piety to pay Zakat. The Zakat was payable in gold or silver, herds and

merchandise. The Zakat when assessed on value or weight, was 1/40th of the property. Zakat could be levied only on that property which was in the possession of the owner for at least one year. There is a mention of a separate treasury for Zakat.

The secular taxes were Kharaj, Jizya, the tax on non-Muslim traders and imposts on spoils of war, on mines and treasure-trove. Kharaj was the tax on land held by non-Muslims. According to Islamic law, its rate varied from 1/10th to one-half.

### Jizya

Jizya was a poll-tax charged only from the non-Muslims. There is a difference of opinion among scholars regarding the nature of this tax. One view is that it was a religious tax levied on the non-Muslims "in return for which they received protection of life and property and exemption from military service, as non-Muslims were not entitled," according to orthodox jurists, to live in a Muslim country. The view of Dr Qureshi is that Jizya was levied from the non-Muslims as the cash equivalent "of the assistance which they would be liable to give if they had not persisted in their unbelief, because living as they do in the Muslim state, they must be ready to defend it." Military service was compulsory for all Muslims and the Sultan could call upon any Muslim to defend the state. This religious duty did not affect the non-Muslims. This shows that Jizya was not a payment for the privilege of living in a Muslim state.

Critics point out that whatever might have been the original intention with which Jizya was levied in Islamic lands outside India, there is no doubt that by the time the Arabs conquered Sind, Jizya had acquired a religious importance. Jizya was levied on the non-Muslims as the state gave them "protection of life and property and exemption from military service." It was considered to be a religious duty by the Sultans to realise the Jizya with all the rigour they could command. It is pointed out that those who hold Jizya to be a secular tax ignore the fact that it was levied in lieu of the protection of life and property of the Zimmis and they put emphasis merely on exemption from military service. It is well-known that even the vassal Hindu Rajas who rendered military service, were not exempted from the payment of Jizya.

Jizya was not levied from women, children, monks, beggars, the blind and the crippled. It was not levied even from the Brahmanas. It was only during the reign of Firuz Shah that Jizya was levied from the Brahmanas. There was a lot of trouble and ultimately the rich Hindus of Delhi undertook to pay for the Brahmanas. On a subsequent representation, the Sultan reduced the tax on the richer Brahmanas to 10 Tankas of 50 Jitals each. The entire Hindu population was divided into three grades for the purpose of Jizya. The first grade paid at the rate of 48 Dirhams, the second 24 Dirhams and the third 12 Dirhams.

The Zakat on imports was a fortieth of the value of the merchandise. It was 50% on horses. These charges were double in the case of non-Muslim traders. Sikander Lodi abolished the Zakat on

grain and it was not renewed by any subsequent Sultan. The spoils of war were known as **Ghanimah**. Legally, out of all the booty collected, one fifth was to be kept for the state and the rest was to be distributed among the soldiers. However, it was lawful for the Sultan or Commander-in-Chief to select an animal, a sword or some other article which particularly pleased him. The share of the state was known as **Khams**. Against the Islamic law, a practice grew up that only a fifth was distributed amongst the soldiers and four-fifths were kept by the state. The state was entitled to a fifth of all minerals provided those were solid and capable of being melted. A fifth of the treasure-trove was to be given to the state and rest was to be kept by the finder. However, if the land did not belong to the finder, the land-owner was entitled to four-fifths of the treasure and the rest was to go to the state. The property of the Muslims dying intestate and without heirs belonged entirely to the state. However, the property of a Hindu dying in similar circumstances was handed over to his community.

### Land Revenue

The main source of income of the Sultan was the land revenue. There were four kinds of land viz., Khalisa territory, land divided into Iqtas and held by Muqti either for a number of years or for life-time, principalities of the Hindu chiefs who had come to terms with the Sultan and the land given away to Muslim scholars and saints in gift. The Khalisa land was directly administered by the Central Government. However, the state dealt only with the local revenue officers and not the individual peasants. There was an Amil or revenue clerk in each sub-division who collected revenue from the Chaudharis and Muqaddams who in their turn realised it from the peasants. The share of the state was based on a summary assessment. The assessment and collection of revenue in the Iqta was in the hands of the Muqti who deducted his own share and paid the surplus to the Central Government. The Sultan appointed an officer called Khwaja in each Iqta to supervise the collection of revenue and also to put a check on the Muqti. There was a possibility of collusion between the Muqti and the Khwaja. The Wakf land or Inam land was free from revenue assessment.

Very important changes were made by Ala-ud-Din Khalji in revenue administration. He confiscated the lands held by Muslim grantees and religious land held as Milk, Inam, Idarat and Wakf. Hindu Muqaddams, Khuts and Chaudharis were made to pay taxes from which they were formerly exempted. The state demand was increased to one-half of the produce. He also imposed the house tax and grazing tax on the peasants. The object of his policy was to increase the revenue and make all classes of people shoulder the burden of taxation. The strictness with which the revenue policy was followed by Ala-ud-Din softened the rigour but did not reduce the state demand from one-half of the produce. He recognised the principle of making deductions for the damage done to the crops due to natural calamity or accident. He allowed the Khuts, Muqaddams and the Chaudharis to enjoy exemption from the taxes on their lands



and their grazing animals. He laid down that the state demand from any *Iqta* was not to be increased more than one-tenth or one-eleventh of the standard assessment in a year. Muhammad Tughluq increased the state demand to 50% in the Deccan. The increase of tax was resented in spite of famine and drought, there was a rebellion. When it was too late, he advanced loans and sank irrigation works. The result was that the whole of the Deccan was ruined. The Sultan also created a new department of agriculture known as *Diyana Khan*. But that also did not succeed. Firuz Iqtayiq concerned the *Iqta* loans. He increased the salaries of the revenue staff. He fixed the revenue of the entire *Khalasi* land on a permanent basis. He abolished as many as 24 taxes. He levied only five taxes, viz., *Kharaj*, *Khamis*, *Jirya*, *Zakat* and irrigation tax. He constructed many canals and sank many wells for irrigation purposes. He encouraged the cultivation of various crops. He planted many gardens. The main defects in his revenue administration were the neglect of the principle of farming out and revenue, the granting of assignments of land revenue and public sale of assignment deeds and the extension of the scope and manner of realisation of *Izra*.

There is a controversy amongst scholars regarding the scale of land revenue demanded by the Sultans of Delhi. The view of Dr. Qureshi is that the state demand was fixed at one-fifth of the gross produce. Those who do not accept this view point out that the Muslim law has laid down that the rate of *Kharaj* should vary from one-tenth to one-half of the produce. The rate of land revenue might have been one-fifth of the produce in the time of the so-called Slave Kings but was increased to one-half by Ala-ud Din Khalji. The Delhi Sultans after Ala-ud-Din Khalji continued to levy the land revenue at the same rate. It was later on that Sher Shah Suri lowered it to one-third of the produce.

There were various kinds of tax-farmers. Sometimes, the village headman acted as a tax-farmer by undertaking to pay a fixed amount to the state on behalf of the peasants. Sometimes the governor of a province was made responsible for the collection of the land revenue and a settlement had to be made with him regarding the amount of money which he was to pay. The tributary chiefs were tax-farmers in a sense because they paid only a fixed tribute. However, the worst tax farmer was the speculator whose only concern was to make as much money as he could unmindful of the sufferings of the peasants.

The system of granting the produce of a defined area of land in return of services was common in India before its conquest by the Muslims and the same was adopted by the Delhi Sultans. The assignment system continued throughout the period, although it was restricted considerably by some Sultans. The view of Ala-ud-Din Khalji was that the assignments encouraged the nobles to rebel and consequently he refrained from giving many assignments. Mubarak Shah was very generous in giving assignments. Ghias-ud-Din Tughluq did not interfere with assignments. In the time of Muhammad Tughluq, the salaries of all high officials were paid by assigning to

them the revenue of towns and villages." The number of assignments grew in the time of Firuz Shah. It is to be noted that to begin with persons to whom assignments were given were in a full possession of these lands or areas and did not merely receive a fixed amount from the local officials. As a matter of fact the assignments were regarded these villages as their hereditary property. However, the nature of the assignments changed later on. The holder of the assignment came to be entitled only to the revenue of the area and he was not to have any right to manage the same. It is not possible to say as to when this change took place but it was positively before Muhammad Tughluq and probably during the reign of Alauddin Khalji who adopted many measures to curb the power of the nobles.

### Water Rate

According to Dr. Qureshi, the Muslim rulers did not charge any extra rate of water for the water supplied through canals by the state. Firuz Shah Tughluq, however, with his private money and charged 10% from those who used the water for irrigation purposes. The money thus received was put into the Privy Purse and not into the state treasury. When the canals irrigated the waste land, Firuz Shah charged one-fifth of the produce.

The idea of digging canals and providing irrigation facilities to the peasants was the outcome of the desire of the Sultans to improve agriculture. If more area was brought under cultivation and better crops were produced, there was a possibility of more revenue for the state. Muhammad Tughluq set up a separate ministry called *Diwan-i-Amir-Kohi*. Its function was to bring new areas under cultivation and to improve the existing crops. The project was sound but it failed on account of inefficient and inexperienced officials. The ministry was continued in the time of Firuz Tughluq and he showed great interest in the improvement of agriculture. He encouraged people to bring new lands under cultivation. Nominal revenue was charged from such persons.

A few local imposts were levied from the people. The vendors of fish, flowers, rope, oil, parched gram and betel leaves were required to pay small cesses. **Jazzari** was levied from butchers at the rate of 12 Jitals per head on cows for slaughter.

### Presents

An important source of revenue consisted of the presents which were made by his subjects to the Sultan. The custom was that if a person wanted to see the Sultan, he had to give a present to him. Things like carpets, horses, camels, arms, vases of gold and silver with precious stones, etc., were given to the king as presents. Ibn Batuta tells us that the Prime Minister offered Muhammad Tughluq gold and silver together "with a porcelain vase filled with rubies, another with emeralds and a third full of magnificent pearls." The system of presents continued even during the Mughal period.

### The Army

As the rule of the Sultans of Delhi was not based on the

willing consent of the people of India. they were required to maintain a large army. Their army consisted of the regular soldiers permanently employed in the service of the Sultan, troops permanently employed in the service of the provincial governors and nobles, recruits employed in times of war and Muslim volunteers enlisted for fighting a holy war of Jihad. The troops of the Sultan at Delhi were known as **Hashm-i-Qalb**. Some of these troops belonged to the Sultan and the others were in the service of the nobles at Delhi. The troops in the service of the Sultan were known as **Khasah Khail** and included royal slaves, guards called Jandars and **Atwaj-i-Qalb** or the troops directly under royal command. Their number was small and they could not be depended upon in times of danger or war. The credit of creating a standing army goes to Ala-ud-Din Khalji who directly recruited, paid and controlled the army. Its number was 4,75,000 horse, in addition to a large number of footmen. This state of affairs continued till the time of Firuz Tughluq who converted the army into a feudal organization. The army of the Lodis was organised on a clannish basis. It was weak and ill-organised. In times of war, the troops maintained by the nobles and governors were placed at the disposal of Diwan-i-Ariz. It was for the Governor concerned to look after their organization, discipline and payment. There did not exist any uniform rules for their recruitment, training and promotion. Irregular troops were employed only in times of war and there was no fixed rule for their payment. The Maulvis and the Ulema were employed by the state for the purpose of arousing the fanaticism of the Muslim soldiers to fight against the Hindu rulers. The Muslim volunteers got a share of the booty and not any regular salary from the treasury.

The army of the Sultans of Delhi was a heterogeneous body. It consisted of Turks of various tribes, the Tajiks, the Persians, the Mongols, the Afghans, the Arabs, the Abyssinians, Indian Mussalmans and the Hindus. It was a mercenary body which worked for the sake of money. The only bond was the Sultan himself.

The army consisted of the cavalry, infantry and elephantry. The cavalry formed the backbone of the military establishment. It was the cavalry of Delhi which successfully kept the Mongols at bay and struck terror into their hearts. Horsemen were armed with two swords, a dagger and a Turkish bow with very good arrows. Some horsemen carried maces also. Many of them wore coats of mail and other jackets quilted with cotton. Horses were caparisoned with steel. Great care was taken by the Sultans to see that their army did not run short of horses. There was a thriving trade in horses between India and Arabia, Turkistan and Russia. Attempts were made even to breed good horses in India. We are told that Ala-ud-Din Khalji had 70,000 horses in the city of Delhi and its neighbourhood.

The foot soldiers were called **Payaks**. Most of them were Hindus, slaves or other persons of humble origin who wanted employment but could not afford horses. They were useful as personal

guards and door-keepers. Sometimes they took part in matters of great importance. They carried swords, daggers, bows and arrows. They were good archers and were known as **Dhanuks**.

The Sultans attached great importance to elephants. Their size, and strength struck terror into the hearts of the foreign warriors. The view of Balban was that a single elephant was as effective in the battle-field as 500 horsemen. A big war-elephant could carry many armed soldiers. They towered above the cavalry and infantry and rained death amongst the ranks of the enemy. Some of them carried on their backs small citadels full of soldiers. Elephants were clad in plates of steel and large scythes were attached to their trunks and tusks. The Sultan had a monopoly of elephants and no person was allowed to keep an elephant without the permission of the Sultan. A large number of elephants at Delhi required a large establishment and the **Shahna-i-Fil** was an important officer of the realm.

There was nothing like modern artillery, but incendiary arrows, javelins and pots full of combustibles were used in battle. Hand-grenades, fire-works, rocks and naphtha balls were used. Various mechanical devices were employed for battering the walls of fortresses, for throwing large balls for projecting naphtha and fire-works. Various kinds of engines were used by the Sultans.

The army was organised on a decimal basis. A Sar-i-Khail had 10 horsemen under him. A sipah-Salar had 10 Sar-i-Khails under him. An Amir had 10 Sipah-Salars under him. A Malik had 10 Amirs under him. A Khan had 10 Maliks under him.

The size of the army varied from time to time. Ala-ud-Din Khalji commanded 4,75,000 horsemen. Muhammad Tughluq had 9,00,000 horsemen. Kaiqubad had 1,00,000 mounted soldiers at Delhi when he made preparations to march against his father. Firuz Tughluq had 90,000 soldiers excluding slaves.

The pay of a soldier must have varied at different times. During the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khalji, a fully equipped cavalryman was paid 234 Tankas per annum. However, the Sultan had to regulate the prices in order to make that salary worth while for him. Muhammad Tughluq paid about 500 Tankas in addition to food, dress and fodder. It is not clear whether the soldier was given dress and food only when he was on active service or he was given the same even in normal times. We are told that a Khan was paid a lac of Tankas. The Malik was paid 50 to 60 thousand Tankas. An Amir was paid 30 to 40 thousand Tankas. A Sipah-Salar was paid 20,000 Tankas. Petty officials received one to ten thousand Tankas a year. Soldiers were paid directly by the state. They were usually paid in cash. By the system of assignments, the nobles were able to get more than their official salary. The assignments were for the personal salary of the officials and did not include the pay of the soldiers.

The Sultans were the masters of military strategy. They employed very commonly the art of ambushing and surprise at-



tacks. Before the actual battle, the prospective theatre of war was thoroughly surveyed. The army was very often divided into the advance-guard, the centre, the right wing, the left wing, the rear-guard and the reserve. According to Dr. Qureshi, there were flanking parties on either flank of an army. However, the army of Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat in 1526 had no such flanking party. Scouts rendered a very useful service.

## Justice

The department of Justice was the most ill-organized department of the Sultanate of Delhi. The Sultan dispensed justice through the Diwan-i-Qaza. He also gave justice through the agency of Diwan-i-Mazalim. Muhammad Tughluq set up a separate department called Diwan-i-Siyasat.

The Diwan-i-Mazalim was presided over by the Amir-i-Dad. This was so when the Sultan was not present in person. Ibn Batuta tells us that Muhammad Tughluq personally heard complaints on every Monday and Thursday. The Sultan sat on a high throne, surrounded by his bodyguard and officers. The Qazi-i-Mumalik sat at the side of the Sultan to give him legal advice. On days when the Sultan did not sit in public, the Hajibs received the complaints and passed them on to the chief Hajib who submitted them to the Sultan. The Governors were required to sit as courts of Mazalim. They were helped by the Sahib-i-Diwan and the Qazi. The courts of Mazalim heard complaints against officials.

The Diwan-i-Qaza had contacts with the departments of Siyasat and Mazalim but its main concern was civil litigation. It may be said that Qaza dealt with common law and Siyasat and Mazalim dealt with administrative law. The head of the Diwan-i-Qaza was the Qazi-i-Mumalik, also known as Qazi-ul-Qazat. The same person was also appointed Sadr-us-Sadur. The chief Qazi was given a salary of 26,000 Tankas a year under Muhammad Tughluq. He was in charge of the whole legal system and the administration of religious affairs. He heard appeals from the lower courts and appointed the local Qazis. Great importance was attached to the Qazi of Delhi. Ibn Batuta was appointed the Qazi of Delhi by Muhammad Tughluq and was addressed as "Our lord and master."

There was a Qazi in every town and his duty was to settle disputes, supervise and manage the property of orphans and lunatics, execute testamentary dispositions and supervise Waqaf. He was required to help destitute widows to find suitable husbands. He was responsible for street maintenance etc. All contested property was deposited with the Qazi or his nominee. It was the duty of the local governors and officials to help the Qazi in maintaining the dignity of law and to co-operate with him in bringing wrong-doers to their senses. The Qazis were not under the Governors as they were directly appointed by the Central Government.

The Amir-i-Dad was associated with justice. He presided

over the court of Mazalim in the absence of the Sultan. When the Sultan was present in person, Amir-i-Dad was responsible for its executive and administrative business. Ordinarily, a man of high rank was appointed as Amir-i-Dad as he had to try complaints against governors and big commanders. Muhammad Tughluq paid his Amir-i-Dad 50,000 Tankas. Amir-i-Dad had his assistants in the provinces. He looked after the executive side of justice. It was his duty to see that the decisions of the Qazi were carried out. Amir-i-Dad was also responsible for the proper maintenance of mosques, bridges and public buildings, city walls and gates. He controlled the Kotwal, the police and the Muhtasib. His office kept copies of the documents registered with the Qazi. It was his duty to forbid a covenant which violated law.

The Sultan believed in the view that a dominion could subsist in spite of misbelief, but it could not endure with the existence of injustice. The officials were generally chosen for their learning and piety. Some Sultans set a high example of justice. Balban is said to have inflicted extreme penalty on a governor who was guilty of murder when he was drunk. Muhammad Tughluq appeared as a defendant in the court of Qazi and when the case was proved against him, he insisted on the penalty. Many instances have been given by Ibn Batuta which show that Muhammad Tughluq had great respect for law. The Qazi was not allowed to get up when the Sultan entered his court. A man complained that the Sultan owed him money. The Sultan appeared before the Qazi and paid the debt. Firuz Shah did not hesitate to execute a favourite who was found guilty of murder.

### Police

The Sultans were very anxious to maintain the security of the state. The routine police duties were performed by the Kotwal. The force of the Kotwal patrolled the city at night and guarded thoroughfares. The Kotwal secured the co-operation of the people in the performance of his duties. He maintained a register of the inhabitants of every quarter, kept himself informed of their activities and means of livelihood and took cognizance of every new arrival and departure. His jurisdiction extended to the rural area also. He also acted as a committing magistrate. The criminal code was severe and punishments were deterrent. In certain cases, the criminal was paraded in the city. The life and property of a rebel were at the mercy of the Sultan. Ala-ud-Din Khalji introduced the system of punishing the family of the rebel. The penal code of the Shara was applied to crimes which came under the jurisdiction of the Qazi.

There was no uniform administrative system under the Sultans of Delhi. During the 13th century, the Delhi Sultanate consisted of military commands known as Iqtas. Each Iqta was under a Muqti. When Ala-ud-Din Khalji conquered practically the whole of the country, he allowed big and small provinces to remain as they were. There were three kinds of provinces under Ala-ud-Din Khalji.

The first kind consisted of the old Iqtas. To the second category belonged the newly conquered provinces and those were placed under military governors known as Walis. To the third category belonged the principalities of the Hindu vassals who were reduced to the position of governors. When the Delhi Sultanate was at its height, it had 23 provinces, viz., Badaun, Bihar, Delhi, Deogiri, Dwarasamud, Gujarat, Hansi, Jajnapur, Kalanaur, Kanauj, Kara, Kuhram, Lahore, Lakhnauti, Ma'bar, Malwa, Multan, Oudh, Samana, Schwan, Sirsuti, Telang and Uch.

### **Governor**

About the appointment of a Governor, Hasan Nizami says that "a famous and exalted servant was chosen so that he might look after the soldiers, servants, warriors and clerks and save them from the treachery of the unbelievers and the designs of the polytheists; he should take pains to fulfil the expectations of the people, he should exercise the greatest circumspection in military and revenue matters, and he should maintain the traditions of benevolence and charity so as to leave a name for eternity."

Qutb-ud-Din Aibak gave certain instructions to his Wali. The Wali was required to protect and enforce the laws, customs and regulations. He was to look after the Ulema, the warriors and civil officials. He was to reconcile the people by reducing their dues and introducing measures of prosperity. He was to increase the produce by extending the cultivation. He was to maintain justice and protect the weak from the rapacity and tyranny of the strong. He was to see that the decisions of the courts were enforced. He was to desist from capital punishment and guard the highways, encourage trade and protect traders. When Fateh Khan was appointed the Governor of Sind by Firuz Shah, certain instructions were given to him. He was to act as the chief executive officer. He was to protect the people and guard their interests. He was to help the learned and the holy. He was to maintain the army in a happy and contented condition. He was to supervise the work of the Diwan-i-Wizarat. He was to protect the peasants from undue exactions and tyranny. He was to supervise the work of public officers.

### **Sahib-i-Diwan**

In every province, there was a Sahib-i-Diwan, also known as Khwaja. He was appointed by the Sultan on the recommendation of the Wazir. He was generally an expert accountant. His duty was to keep account books and submit detailed statements to the headquarters. It was on the basis of those sheets that the Department of the Wazir settled the account with the Muqti. Officially, the Khwaja was subordinate to the Governor. However, in actual practice, he was a power to reckon with and he was a check on the authority of the Governor. The reports of the Khwaja might lead to the dismissal of the Governor.

### **Shiqs**

During the 13th century, there was no lower unit of administration than the Iqta. However, during 14th century, the provinces

were divided into Shiqs. Probably, this was not done everywhere. Muhammad Tughlaq divided the viceroyalty of the Deccan into four Shiqs. There was a Shiqdar at the head of a Shiq. He was probably a military officer and his duty was to maintain law and order within his jurisdiction.

### Parganah

The next smaller unit was the Parganah which has rightly been identified by Moreland with the Qasbah meaning thereby an aggregate of villages. The next division was the **village**. Ibn Batuta refers to **Sadi** which he defines in these words: "These people give the name of Sadi to the collection of a hundred villages." Ibn Batuta refers to the Sadi of Hindpat which can be identified with the Parganah of Indrapat in the neighbourhood of Delhi. It appears that the term Sadi was not officially adopted and that explains its absence from contemporary records.

It appears that the administration of villages continued in the hands of Hindu officials. There was a Panchayat in every village and most of the disputes were settled there. The people of the village looked after their affairs themselves and ordinarily they were not interfered with by the Sultan. There was a Chowkidar and a Patwari in every village.

We may conclude by saying that on the whole, the administration of the Delhi Sultans was a sort of military rule which was maintained by fear of force. It was not based on the consent of the people. Ordinarily, the Government was worried only about collecting money from the people. It did not consider its responsibility for their welfare. The non-Muslims who formed a majority of the population, were completely ignored. The result was that the position of the Sultans was never stable and we have references of frequent revolts against the authority of Sultans.

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## CHAPTER XVI

# Social and Economic Life During Delhi Sultanate

It is interesting to know how people lived during the Sultanate period. As is the case even today, most of the people then also lived in villages and only a microscopic minority of them lived in cities. There was plenty of land for cultivation and hence there was no pressure of population on land as such. Ordinarily, there was plenty of production. However, occasionally, there were periods of draught and scarcity on account of the failure of rains. Foodgrains were not only in plenty but also cheap. There was no incentive for increased production. No efforts were made to improve agricultural implements or evolve scientific methods of raising agricultural output. The traditional type of the plough was used by the peasants all over the country. On the whole, food was not a problem at all in those days.

The problem of shelter also did not worry the people. Building material was cheap and readily available. On the countryside, houses were mostly made of mud with thatched roofs. Both of these materials could be had locally and hence no problem of transport was involved. The construction of mud houses did not require any skill which could be built by the people themselves with their own hands.

Villages were self-contained units and the people did not depend upon outside help for the satisfaction of their needs. Their wants were few and could be satisfied locally. In every village, one could see a barber and a cobbler. The Banias were also there. Although they were occasionally greedy, yet they were essential for the village economy.

There existed a greater degree of security and social cohesion among the people than it is today. Every villager was proud of the fact that he belonged to a group. The existence of the joint family system gave him protection. The village Panchayat also helped him in settling his disputes and removing his grievances. The people lived a life of leisure. There was no hustle and bustle. The people had plenty of entertainment, although of a simple nature,

and those entertainments cost them practically nothing. There were both religious and seasonal festivities. Community dances were not uncommon. Religious recitations and Kathas served the spiritual needs of the people. Thus, there did exist some spice and charm for the people.

The number of big cities was not large in those days and the important ones were Delhi, Jaunpur, Lahore etc. We are told that these cities had such amenities as public baths, bakeries and market places. The houses were generally made of stones and bricks with roofs of wood. The number of multi-storey houses was not large. The royal palaces had sometimes more than one storey. Some nobles also built houses with many storeys. Both the Sultans and the nobles wasted a lot of money on luxuries and show which were considered to be essential for their status. A lot of money was also wasted on entertainments, drinking bouts, parties etc. It cannot be denied that these habits went a long way in undermining the morale of the Sultans, princes and nobles. Their health was also spoiled although they tried to make up the same by swordsmanship, hunting and other field sports. Military exercises also helped to build up their health.

It is true that the nobles were aristocrats and wasted a lot of time and money in frivolous entertainments. However, it is also true that the nobles were men of culture. They possessed high literary tastes and a few of them were patrons of art and literature. Some of them possessed big libraries and set up schools and colleges.

In addition to the nobles, there were jurists, saints, scholars, savants and philosophers like the Ulemas, Shaikhs, Sufis, Pandits, Yogis etc., who were held in high esteem by the people. These people constituted the intellectual elite of the country.

There was practically no middle class in the societies of those days. There were the privileged and unprivileged classes. The privileged class was numerically small and it was made up of the members of the imperial family, the courtesans, nobles, Afghans, Ulemas and other learned men in Islamic law and theology and a few others. The members of this class wielded a lot of power and enjoyed many rights, immunities and concessions. The rest of the people belonged to the unprivileged class. Even if some of them possessed wealth, they were treated with contempt. Even a rich Bania did not enjoy any status. Writers like Ibn Batuta and Abdur Razzaq refer to the wide gulf which divided the privileged and unprivileged classes.

Most of the Muslims in India in those days were converts from Hinduism. Although many of them were poor, yet they considered themselves superior to the Hindus. The Hindus were divided into a large number of castes and sub-castes. The Brahmanas occupied a high position among the Hindus on account of their learning and nobility. The Kshatriyas also were respected and many of them were also known for their learning. The Vaishvas were busy in trade, commerce and agriculture. The people belonging to the low

castes worked as carpenters, goldsmiths, silversmiths and ironsmiths, tailors, musicians etc. The position of women among the Hindus was not high, although they were treated with great respect. Practices such as Sati, Jauhar, Purdah, female infanticide and child marriage were prevalent among the Hindus. There were many women poets and artists of high distinction.

It is true that the Muslims were the rulers and the Hindus were subjects, but it cannot be said that they were absolutely isolated from each other. Actually, there was a great deal of intermixing. It is true that the Hindus suffered a lot and sometimes the treatment given to them was unbearable, but by and by, they tried to adjust themselves to their environments. They learned to put up with the destruction of their temples and forced conversions to Islam. They learned to resign themselves to their fate. It is contended that conversions from Hinduism to Islam also brought the Hindus and Muslims nearer to each other. The converts to Islam could not and did not give up their old associations at once and hence there was mutual understanding between the Hindus and the new converts to Islam. However, it is pointed out that the new converts might have shown more fanaticism in their attitude towards the Hindus as the zeal of a new convert is proverbial. It is pointed out that both the Hindus and Muslims took part in festivals like Dussehra, Holi, Moharram, Shab-i-Barat etc. On those occasions, the Hindus and Muslims mixed freely and shared the joys, pleasures and sorrows of those celebrations. It is pointed out that even the mode of some of these festivals was changed on account of their joint participation by the Hindus and Muslims. Although Shab-i-Barat was essentially a Muslim festival, the use of fire works was borrowed from the Hindu festival of Shivaratri. The system of carrying Tazivas during the Muharram days was probably borrowed from Hindu festivals such as Jagannath Rath Yatra, Krishna Lila and Mahanaumi.

The Sufis, saints, philosophers, poets, Faqirs and Yogis also helped to bring the Hindus and Muslims together. These saintly persons created a spiritual climate which was favourable for bringing the two communities together.

The Muslims in India were divided into two sects, the Sunnis and the Shias. The Sunnis were backed by the Sultans of Delhi and they were the deadly enemies of Shias. The Shias had entered India with the Arab conquest of Sind and were therefore powerful in Sind and Multan. The efforts of Mahmud of Ghazni to destroy the Shia power in Multan failed. When the Slave dynasty was established in 1206, the chances of Shia influence in India became less. During the reign of Queen Raziya, the Shias revolted but failed. After that, the Shias were not in a position to challenge the domination of the Sunnis during the Sultanate period.

The Sufis among the Muslims tried to challenge the supremacy of the Sunnis. They came into prominence in about 10th century in Persia. They believed in union with God achieved through love of God. They came to India before the establishment of the Turkish power in the country. As the Sufis were considered to be heretics,

they became secretive and aloof. Their language became highly symbolic. Sometimes they formed an order under a Shaikh or Pir and their members were called Fakirs or Darvesh. Some of them even evolved special rituals such as dancing. There were three important orders of the Sufis in India, viz., Chishti, Suhrawardi and Firdausi. The Firdausi order was popular in Bihar. The followers of the Suhrawardi order were found mainly in Sind. The Chisti order was popular in and around Delhi and the Doab and Barani and Amir Khusrav belonged to this order.

The view of the Sufis in India was that the Quran was being misinterpreted by the Muslim Ulema in India. They maintained that the Ulema were deviating from the original democratic and egalitarian principles of the Quran. There was a lot of bitterness between the Ulema and the Sufis. The former denounced the latter for their liberal ideas and the latter accused the former of having fallen to temptations offered by the Sultans of Delhi. The Sufis did not resort to rebellion. They merely isolated themselves from the conditions they did not approve of. They believed that the millennium was coming and the Mahdi (The Redeemer) would come to restore the pristine faith of Islam. The Sufi Pirs were held in high esteem by the Hindus.

Unlike the Ulema, the Sufis not only believed in equality but also practised it in their lives. This brought them near the artisans and cultivators. The Sufis became the religious leaders of the peasants and the artisans and not the Ulema.

It is contended that the Sufis did not believe in a policy of escapism. They kept themselves aloof from society in order to pursue knowledge.

In the popular mind, the Sufis were frequently associated with magic. Sidi Maula had no visible source of income and in spite of that he gave a lot to the poor. It was suspected that it was due to magic. However, the possibility is that the money might have come from the disaffected nobles who wanted to use Sidi Maula for purposes of organizing opposition to the Sultan.

It is contended that if the Sufis had not followed a policy of isolation from society, the results would have been different. Their contribution to society would have been a healthy one. The fanaticism of the Muslims during the Sultanate period would have been less and the Hindus would have suffered less during this period. That also might have strengthened the hands of the leaders of the Bhakti movement.

It is rightly pointed out that there are certain similarities between the Sufis and the leaders of the Bhakti movement. They all believed in the necessity of union with God. They all believed that love was the basis of relationship with God. They all believed in the necessity of a Pir or Guru in life. However, the leaders of the Bhakti movement did not believe in the mysticism of the Sufis. They did not believe in remaining aloof or isolated from the people. They believed in mixing with the people and solving their problems of life.



### Economic Condition

For centuries, wealth had been accumulating in India. However, when the Muslims came to India, they plundered that wealth wherever it was found. They collected it from the Hindu rulers, the temples and the individuals. The Muslims who plundered this wealth so easily and conveniently, did not keep the same to themselves. They lived very extravagant lives and the result was that they spent all they had. The ultimate result was that all that wealth came into the open market.

As there was a lot of ill-gotten wealth in the hands of the aristocracy there arose a demand for articles of luxury. To meet that demand, many manufacturing centres came into existence. The Government also set up its own Karkhanas. The Government granted subsidies to industrialists to increase industrial output. Foreign travellers like Marco Polo testified to the fact that there was great industrial development in the country under the Sultans. Gujarat produced cotton fabrics of a very high quality. Bengal produced textiles which were unmatched in fineness and designs. Bengal sent outside India articles like silk handkerchiefs, painted wares, caps embroidered with gold threads, guns, knives and scissors. Both Bengal and Cambay exported cotton and silk fabrics to many West Asian countries like Syria, Arabia and Persia. There was a great demand in Europe for a type of shash called Sirband manufactured in Bengal. This was used as a head dress by European ladies.

Indian craftsmen and artists were famous for producing beautiful jewellery and expensive curios. Babar was so much struck by their excellence that he could not help paying a tribute to them. That was partly due to the fact that art was hereditary and each generation succeeded in improving upon the previous designs.

The means of transport and communication in those days were good in their own way. Although they cannot be compared with the present ones, yet they served the people well. The roads and the other means of transport served all the demands of industry and commerce. Goods were carried over long distance from manufacturing centres to cities and ports. Most of the merchants in those days were Hindus. The Sindhis were known for their shrewdness. They were very prosperous and a writer like Shams-i-Siraj Afif refers to their prosperity. We are told that most of the Hindu merchants of Delhi possessed plenty of ornaments which was a sign of their prosperity.

The foreign trade of India was carried on both by land and sea. Arabian traders who used to visit Southern India even before the rise of Islam, now extended their activities to Northern India also. Iran and Egypt also entered the Indian markets. All that added to the foreign trade of the country. Indian ports served as clearing houses for most of the trade between South Asia and East Asia and West Asian countries. India gained a lot from customs duties. Debal in Sindh, Baroach and Cambay in Gujarat, Thana in Maharashtra, Mangalore in Vijayanagar Empire, Choul and Dabhol in

Bahmani Kingdom and Calicut Quillon and Cape Camorin in Malabar were the important Indian ports which handled most of the foreign trade of the country. The exports of India included goods of luxury and daily use, the important among them being jewels, pearls, elephant tusks, odoriferous woods like Sandal and Ud and clove, pepper, nutmeg, camphor, brocades, cotton and silk fabrics, jute, cocoanut etc. India imported Turkish and Arab horses. The balance of trade was always in favour of India and consequently a lot of gold and silver came to India from outside to make up the difference. No wonder, Babar says that there was a lot of gold and silver in the country. It was this wealth of the country which made it possible for the Sultans of Delhi and their nobles to be the patrons of art and literature and the builders of beautiful and magnificent edifices. It is to be noted that Indian traders had a reputation for honesty and integrity and they were welcomed everywhere. The Indians were also sea-faring people. They built excellent ships and most of India's foreign trade was carried on in those ships. Those ships earned a lot of wealth for the country.

It is clear from above that India was a rich and prosperous country during the Sultanate period. However, that wealth was not equally distributed. The gulf between the rich and the poor was very great and that was hardly desirable.

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## CHAPTER XVII

# Architecture and Literature

The Turks who conquered India were not mere barbarians. They had a genius for architecture. According to Fergusson "Nothing could be more brilliant, and at the same time more characteristic, than the commencement of the architectural career of these Pathans in India. A nation of soldiers equipped for conquest and that only, they of course brought with them neither artists nor architects, but, like all nations of Turanian origin, they had strong architectural instincts, and, having a style of their own, they could hardly go wrong in any architectural project they might attempt."

According to Sir John Marshall, "By the close of the twelfth century, then, when the Muslims established their power permanently in India, it was no longer a case of their having to be tutored by their new subjects in the art of building; they themselves were already possessed of a highly-developed architecture of their own, as varied and magnificent as the contemporary architecture of Christian Europe; and the Muslims, moreover, who conquered India—men of Afghan, Persian and Turki blood—were endowed with remarkably good taste and a natural talent for building. The picture that some writers have drawn of them as wild and semi-barbarous hill-men descending on an ancient and vastly superior civilisation, is far from the truth. That they were brutal fighters, without any of the chivalry, for example, of the Rajputs, and that they were capable of acts of savagery and gross intemperance, may be conceded. But these were vices common in those ages to most Asiatic nations and did not preclude them any more than they had precluded the Ghaznavids from participating in the prevalent culture and arts of Islam. Qutb-ud-Din Aibak was ruthless enough to enslave *en masse* the population of Kalinjar, but he also had the genius and imagination to create a mosque as superb as any in Islam; and though Ala-ud-Din Khalji slaughtered thousands of Mongols in cold blood at Delhi, he was the author of buildings of unexampled grace and nobility. Doubtless it was due in a great measure to this inborn artistry, coupled with a natural catholicity of taste, that the new-comers were so quick to appreciate the talent and adaptability of the Indian craftsmen and to turn these qualities to account on their own buildings." (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, pp. 569-70.)

It is not correct to describe the architecture of the Sultanate period as "Indo-Saracenic" or "Pathan" as done by scholars like Fergusson. Likewise, it is not correct to describe it as entirely Indian in "soul and body" as done by Havell. As a matter of fact, there was a blending of Indian and Islamic styles. Sir John Marshall rightly points out that "Indo-Islamic art is not merely a local variety of Islamic art." Likewise, it is not merely "a modified form of Hindu art..... Broadly speaking, Indo-Islamic architecture derives its character from both sources, though not always in an equal degree." Before the coming of the Muslims to India, there already existed in this country what are known as Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain styles of architecture. The Muslims also brought with them the arts of different parts of Western and Central Asia, Northern Africa and South-Western Europe. The mingling of the styles brought into existence a new style of Indian architecture. In the case of Delhi, the Islamic influence predominated. "At Jaunpur, on the other hand, and in the Deccan, the local style enjoyed greater ascendancy, while in Bengal the conquerors not only adopted the fashion of building in brick but adorned their structures with chiselled and moulded enrichments frankly imitated from Hindu prototypes. So too in Western India they appropriated to themselves almost *en bloc* the beautiful Gujarati style, which has yielded some of the finest buildings of medieval India; and in Kashmir they did the same with the striking wooden architecture which must have been long prevalent in that part of the Himalayas."

The amalgamation of the foreign and native styles of architecture was made possible by certain factors. The Turks in India had to employ Indian craftsmen and sculptors who had their own ideas about the form and method of construction and consequently they were able to introduce into Muslim buildings their own ideas. Moreover, the Muslims used the materials of Hindu and Jain temples for their mosques, tombs and palaces and this fact also affected the Muslim buildings in the country. There were also certain resemblances in the Muslim and Hindu buildings which enabled the Muslims to convert the temples into mosques by demolishing their flat roofs and providing domes and minarets in their places. Sir John Marshall has rightly pointed out that one feature common to Hindu temples and Muslim mosques was "the open court encompassed by chambers of colonnades, and such temples as were built on this plan naturally lent themselves to conversion into mosques and would be the first to be adapted for that purpose by the conquerors. Again, a fundamental characteristic that supplied a common link between the styles was the fact that both Islamic and Hindu arts were inherently decorative. Ornament was as vital to the one as to the other; both were dependent on it for their being."

According to Sir Henry Sharpe, "The monotheistic puritanism of Islam delighted in the simplicity of the unbogged dome, the plain symbolism of the pointed arch and the slenderness of the minaret. Hindu polytheism, on the other hand, invited to variety and complexity of form and the decoration of every part with deep bas-relief and the human figure..... The conquerors could not fail to be



influenced by the arts which had flourished around them. Hindu ornament began to invade the simpler Islamic forms. The plain severity of the dome submitted to the incision of the Kalasha or ornate lotus cresting, and its metal fin gave place to an elaborate carving in stone. Moreover, the Muhammadans learned from the Hindus lessons in the proportionate massing of buildings and the disposition of their parts. Lack of symmetry was remedied, and in the tombs of Isa Khan and Humayun, we find a splendid synthesis of Muslim ideas and Hindu methods of treatment." (*Delhi, Its Story and Buildings*, pp. 20-21.)

### Quwwat ul Islam Mosque

The first architectural construction made by Qutb-ud-Din Aibak was the **Quwwat ul-Islam mosque**. This was founded in 1198 A.D. to commemorate the capture of Delhi and was dedicated "to the might of Islam." It consisted of an open quadrangle enclosed by colonnades of which the western one constitutes the prayer chamber. Seen from within or without, the building, as originally designed, presented an essentially Hindu appearance. Half of the plinth on which it stood was actually the basement of a Hindu temple and the rest of the structure was composed of materials from the 27 shrines of the Hindus. In 1198 an arched screen of Muhammadan design was thrown across the whole front of the prayer chamber. It is pointed out that the screen is not an architectural success. It is obviously an after-thought and not an integral and organic part of the structure. In 1230 A.D., Iltutmish more than doubled the area of the mosque by throwing out wings to the prayer chamber and screen and by adding an outer court. The new work was fundamentally Islamic in character and obviously designed, if not executed, by Muslim craftsmen. Ala-ud-Din Khalji also enlarged the mosque.

### Qutb Minar

Qutb Minar was originally intended to be a tower from which the Muslims could be called for prayer. However, it very soon came to be regarded as a tower of victory, like those at Chittor and Mandu. As originally designed, the Qutb Minar stood some 225 feet in height and comprised 4 storeys. Only a portion of the first storey was constructed by Qutb-ud-Din Aibak and the rest was completed by Iltutmish. In the time of Firuz Shah Tughluq, the Minar was struck by lightning and the fourth storey was dismantled and replaced by two smaller ones. Its height was also raised to 234 feet. In 1503, the Minar was again restored and its upper storeys were repaired.

On the strength of certain short Nagari records in the interior, attempts have been made to prove that the Minar was originally Hindu and Muslims merely recarved the outer surface. This view is rejected by Sir John Marshall who points out that the whole conception of the Minar and almost every detail of its construction and decoration is essentially Islamic. While towers of this kind were unknown to the Indians, those were familiar to the Muslims. The calligraphic inscriptions and the elaborate stalactite corbelling beneath the balconies also point out to its Muslim origin. Fergusson was of the view that the Qutb Minar was the most perfect example of

a tomb known to exist anywhere. According to Sir John Marshall, "Nothing, certainly, could be more imposing or more fitting symbol of Muslim power than this stern and state-like fabric, nor could anything be more exquisite than its rich but restrained carvings."

The **tomb of Iltutmish** is unpretentious in its form and dimensions. It is a simple square chamber. However, its decoration is very elaborate. Almost the entire surface of the walls within are covered from floor to ceiling with Quranic texts.

The **Sultan Ghari**<sup>1</sup> was built in 1231-32 A.D. Its plan is not like the tomb of Iltutmish or of any other tomb in India. It stands in the middle of a square fortress-like enclosure with round turrets at the four corners. Most of the enclosure is of grey granite, but the mosque and entrance portico and the exterior facing of the tomb are of white marble.

The **Arhai-Din-Ka-Jhompri** was built at Ajmer in 1200 A.D. by Qutb-ud-Din Aibak. Later on, Iltutmish beautified it with a screen. The view that the building was originally built within two and a half days is not accepted and it is suggested that it might have taken two and a half years to construct it. In style and construction, it closely resembles the Quwwat-ul-Islam at Delhi, but its area is more than double and several parts of it are more spacious and dignified. The architect at Ajmer has succeeded in creating a hall of really solemn beauty. However, it does not possess the delicate subtle beauty of Quwwat-ul-Islam.

The **tomb of Balban** is a simple structure comprising a square domed chamber, 38 inches across, with an arched entrance in each of its sides and a smaller chamber to the East and West. Unfortunately, every trace of decoration has disappeared from the tomb and what is left is a mere shell. However, the presence of arches built on true scientific principles gives it great importance. It is a symbol of a reaction against the Hindu influences of the Hindu artisans.

Ala-ud-Din Khalji was responsible for the construction of the **Jamaat Khana Masjid** at the Dargah of Nizam-ud-Din Auliya and the **Alai Darwaza** at the Qutb. The Jamaat Khana Masjid is the earliest example in India of a mosque built wholly in accordance with Muslim ideas and with materials especially quarried for the purpose. It is of red sand-stone and consists of three chambers. Originally, the building was intended not as a mosque but as a tomb for Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din and consisted of the central chamber only. The side wings were added in the beginning of the Tughluq dynasty when it was converted into a mosque.

The **Alai Darwaza** was built in 1311 A.D. It was the southern gateway leading into Ala-ud-Din's extension of Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque. In spite of mutilations, the Alai Darwaza is one of the most

1. This is in the village of Malikpur near old Delhi. Nasiruddin Mahmud, elder son of Iltutmish, was buried here.

treasured gems of Islamic architecture. Like the tomb of Iltutmish, it consisted of a square hall roofed by a single dome, with arched entrances piercing each of its four walls. It is of red sand-stone relieved by white marble. It is freely adorned with bands of Quranic texts. In every feature, whether structural or decorative, the Alai Darwaza is incomparably better. Seen at a distance, its well-proportioned lineaments are accentuated by the alternating red and white colour of its walls. An added dignity is given by the high plinth on which it stands. If seen from very near, the harmony of forms and colour is increased by the wealth of lace-like decorations on its walls. According to Sir John Marshall, "The key-notes of this building are its perfect symmetry and the structural propriety of its parts. Whoever the architect may have been, he was a man of irreproachable taste who was not satisfied merely with repeating traditional ideas but who set himself to think out and perfect every detail of his creation." The other monuments of Ala-ud-Din at Delhi were **City of Siri** and the **Hauz-i-Alai** or the **Hauz-i-Khas** tank. The city of Siri was constructed in about 1303 in order to protect the population of the suburbs of Delhi. Only some fragments of the encircling walls of the city are now left. Even they throw some light on the military architecture of that period.

There was a change in the art of architecture under the Tughluqs. Lavish display of ornaments and richness of details gave place to puritanical simplicity. This change was due partly to the urgent need for economy and partly to the general revulsion of feeling against the excesses of the Khalji regime. The extreme religious bigotry of the Tughluqs was also responsible for the change. There was also a decay of skilled craftsmanship during the reign of Muhammad Tughluq on account of the wholesale shifting of the population of Delhi to Daulatabad.

There are only two monuments of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq which are important and those are the **City of Tughluqabad** and the sepulchre which he built for himself beneath its walls. The walls, landscape, bastions, battlements, narrow loopholes, steep entrance-ways and lofty narrow portals of the two monuments produce an impression of unassailable strength and melancholy grandeur. The marble and sand-stone of which the tomb of Ghiyas-ud-Din is built, are treated in a strikingly novel fashion. The impression created by the walls is one of simplicity and strength. No resting place could have been devised better for the founder of the Tughluq dynasty.

During the first two years of his reign, Muhammad Tughluq founded the small **fortress of Adilabad** and the city of Jahan Panah. Adilabad was merely an outwork of the larger city of Tughluqabad and was almost identical with it in style. **Jahan Panah** was made by linking up the walls of old Delhi with those of Siri. It was in this way that the suburbs which had grown up between them were enclosed. The fortifications were 2 yards in thickness and were constructed of rough rubble in lime. There was also a double-storeyed bridge of seven spans, with subsidiary arches and a tower at each end, which served as a regulator for drawing off the waters of a lake inside the walls.

Firuz Shah Tughluq was responsible for the construction of cities, forts, palaces, embankments, mosques and tombs. He was responsible for the foundation of the cities of Jaunpur, Fatehabad and Hissar Firuza. At Delhi, he built the palace Fort of Firuzabad. He provided not less than 120 rest houses for the convenience of Muslim travellers. Canals were dug to bring water to the newly-established cities. Firuz Shah was responsible for the construction of Kotla Firuz Shah. He built there eight public mosques and one private mosque and three palaces. Within the walls of Kotla Firuz Shah, the best preserved monuments are the Jami Masjid and a pyramidal structure crowned by a pillar of Asoka which was brought to Delhi from the village of Topra in the Ambala District. Firuz Shah also built for himself at the Hauz-i-Khas the college and tomb. The mausoleum of Khan-i-Jahan Tilangani, the Prime Minister of Firuz Shah, is also of great interest.

Another monument of the Tughluq period is the tomb of the saint, Kabir-ud-Din Auliya, locally known as Lal Gumbad. There is reason to believe that it was constructed in the reign of Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud Shah (1389-92). It is a copy of the tomb of Tughluq Shah.

The Sayyid and Lodi kings had very limited resources at their command and consequently they could not afford to have vast and ambitious schemes of buildings. The chief and best example of architecture during this period are tombs of kings and nobles. The important tombs of the kings are those of Mubarak Shah Sayyid (at Mubarakpur), Muhammad Shah and Sikandar Lodi. The tombs of the nobles are not without much dignity and strength and the most important among them are the tombs of Bare Khan and Chhote Khan, the Bara Gumbad, the Shish Gumbad, the tomb of Shihab-ud-Din Taj Khan, Dadi Ka Gumbad and Poli Ka Gumbad. The Moth Ki Masjid was built by the Prime Minister of Sikandar Lodi and it is considered to be the finest specimen of the architecture of the Lodis.

### Provincial Architectures

No account of the architecture of the Sultanate period will be complete without a reference to the architecture of the various provinces which became independent of Delhi. The provincial architectures were similar to Delhi architecture but in certain respects they differed. The rulers of various provinces could not afford to spend as much money as the Sultans of Delhi did. Moreover, provincial architecture was very much influenced by the local art traditions of pre-Turkish period. The peculiar conditions prevailing in various provinces also affected their art.

### Multan

Multan was one of the earliest cities to be occupied by the Muhammadans. During the several centuries of continuous Muslim rule, many monuments of importance must have been erected in the city. The earliest buildings were two mosques. The first was built by Mohammad bin Qasim and the second was constructed on



the site of the famous temple of Aditya which was demolished by the Karmathians. The shrines of Shah Yusuf Gardizi (built about 1152 A.D.), Baha-ul-Haqq (built in 1262 A.D.) and Shams ud-Din also known as Shams-i-Tabrizi (built after 1276 A.D.), are also important. The tomb of Shadna Shahid is an excellent example of the method of construction prevalent at that time. The tomb of Rukn-i-Alam was built by Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq between 1320 and 1324. This is considered to be "one of the most splendid memorials ever erected in honour of the dead." The spirit underlying its design is largely Persian.

### Bengal

The Bengal school of architecture is a class by itself and is inferior to most of the other provincial architectures in design, execution, finish and decoration. The buildings of this period in Bengal were largely made of bricks and stone was very rarely used. The architecture was characterised by "the use of pointed arches on short pillars and the Muslim's adaptation of the traditional Hindu temple style of curvilinear cornices copies from the bamboo structures, and of beautifully carved Hindu symbolic decorative designs like the lotus." The ruins of the buildings are to be found at Gaur or Lakhnauti, Tribeni and Pandua. The tomb and mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi were built at Tribeni in the Hughli district. The tomb was built largely out of the materials taken from a temple of Krishna which formerly stood on the same spot. The **Adina Masjid** was constructed by Sikandar Shah (1358-89) in the new capital of Pandua. This mosque was the most ambitious structure of its kind in Eastern India. In area, this mosque was almost as big as the great Mosque of Damascus. It was 507½ feet from north to south and 285½ feet from east to west. Although it was regarded in Bengal as one of the wonders of the world, its design was not worthy of its size. According to Sir John Marshall, no place of worship was ever devised of such magnitude and with so little sense for the beautiful as the Adina Masjid. Considered by themselves, the several parts and details are admirable enough but no amount of perfection in its parts can compensate for the lack of organic composition and due proportion in the economy of the whole. Cunningham has rightly observed that its design is more suitable for a caravan sarai than a mosque. It is monotonous and commonplace. The mosque and Minar at Chhota Pandua in the Hughli District and the mosque and tomb of Akhi Siraj-ud-Din at Gaur were also constructed during the reign of Sikandar Shah.

The **Eklakhi tomb** at Pandua is the tomb of Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad Shah who was the son of Raja Kans. According to Sir John Marshall, this tomb is one of the finest in Bengal and peculiarly interesting as the prototype on which many mosques in that part of India were subsequently modelled. The design is simple and the fabric is of brick.

The **Sath Gumbad** mosque was constructed about 1459 A.D. It is noteworthy for its conical turrets and the unusual treatment of its frontal cornice. The interior is a fine spacious apartment. The

Dakhil Darwaza was built by Barbak Shah (1459-74). It is a superb example of work what can be achieved in brick and terracotta. It is 60 feet in height and 113 feet from back to front. It consists of a central arched passage with guard rooms on either side. At each of its four corners is a five-storeyed tapering turret, once crowned by a dome. Its outstanding merit is the surprising boldness of design and the masterly skill with which its facades have been broken up and diversified by alternating effects of light and shade. The Tantipara Masjid has suffered very much from the effects of time, but even in its ruins, it is an object of beauty. Cunningham was of the opinion that this was the finest edifice in Gaur. If perfection of details were the criterion of good architecture, his opinion would be fully justified. In the matter of superficial ornaments, the Tantipara Masjid marks the zenith of the Bengal school.

The **Lotan Masjid** is the best surviving example of the type of mosque peculiar to Bengal. It is said to take its name from a favourite dancing girl of Yusuf Shah (1474-81). This Masjid is of brick and has a square prayer chamber built on the model of the Eklakhi tomb.

The **Firuz Minar** at Gaur was designed to work both as a tower of Victory and the **Mazina** of a mosque. It has a five-storeyed tower about 84 feet in height.

The monuments of the **Husain Shah** period (1493-1552) are the **Chhota Sona Masjid** (Small Golden Mosque), the **Bara Sona Masjid** (Great Golden Mosque) and the **Qadam Rasul Mosque**. The **Bara Sona Masjid** has the merit of simplicity and impressiveness. Fergusson was of the view that it was perhaps the finest memorial now left in Gaur.

## Gujarat

The Gujarat style of architecture was probably the finest and most beautiful of all the provincial architectures. According to Dr. Burgess, the Gujarat style combined "all the beauty and finish of the native art with a certain magnificence which is deficient in their own works." The Jain temple of Abu which was finished in 1032 A.D., served as a source of inspiration to master-craftsmen who were employed by the rulers of Gujarat. Ahmad Shah was a great builder and he founded the city of Ahmedabad in the first half of the 15th century. There he built mosques and palaces. In their construction, he gave a free hand to his craftsmen. The **Tin Darwaza** (Triple Gateway) was the principal entrance to the outer courtyard of the palace. It is 37 feet in thickness. The charm of this gateway lies in its perfectly proportioned and delicately framed archways.

The tomb of **Darya Khan** (1453) is permeated with a strong Persian spirit. It is an imposing square structure with a lofty central dome and lower domed verandahs on its four sides.

With the accession of **Mahmud Begarha**, the architecture of Gujarat entered upon its most magnificent stage. The new ruler was responsible for the founding of new cities. Ahmedabad was enclosed

with additional lines of fortification and beautified with broad streets and a multitude of splendid edifices. He came to have a special fondness for Champanir and there he caused a city and a palace citadel to be built. He also built the Jama Masjid at Champanir. This Mosque has been described as second to none in Gujarat. It is undoubtedly a striking edifice.

The mosque of Rani Sipari (1514) was considered by Fergusson as one of the most exquisite structures in the world. According to Sir John Marshall, it is difficult to single out a building in the whole world in which the parts are more harmoniously blended or in which balance, symmetry and decorative rhythm combine to produce a more perfect effect. The Mosque is a small one but this very smallness is an asset in its favour.

The mosque of Sidi Savvid is unusually plain and chaste. It is difficult to imagine anything more simple and unassuming. This mosque has gracefully well proportioned arches and superbly designed window screens.

### Malwa

Malwa evolved a distinct style of architecture. There are two mosques at Dhar which was the original capital of Malwa. The one mosque was originally a Sanskrit college which was attached to a Hindu temple. Even now, it is known as Bhojashala, it was later on converted into a mosque. The second mosque was built out of the materials of Hindu buildings. The pillars and tombs are Hindu in form.

Mandu was established as the capital of Malwa by the local Sultans. Of all the fortress cities of India, Mandu is the most magnificent. The plateau on which it stands rises a thousand feet and more above the plains of the Nerbada. There was a time when the whole of the plateau within the walls was covered with buildings. However, most of them are now levelled to the ground. It is only a few palaces, mosques or tombs that have been left. The mosque of Dilawar Khan Ghuri is interesting for its pillars and carved ceilings. The Jami Masjid at Mandu was planned and begun by Hushang but the same was finished by Mahmud Khalji. The latter also built the remarkable Darbar Hall now known as the Hindola Mahal. Sir John Marshall is of the view that among all the monuments at Delhi of that period, there is not one that can equal the impressive grandeur of the **Hindola Mahal** or the Jami Masjid at Mandu. The former of these two buildings is unique of its kind. Its plan is T-shaped, the stem of the T forming the Darbar Hall and the cross a group of smaller apartments in two storeys intended for the Zanana and furnished, wherever necessary, with lattice screens. The Hindola Mahal is 160 feet long and about 100 feet wide. The **Jami Masjid** is almost as simple as but less vehement in style than the Hindola Mahal. From east to west, it measures 288 feet and from north to south it is about 20 feet less. The Jami Masjid lacks in poetry and creative inspiration. It is too cold and formal and calculated to rank among the really great architectural creations of India. However, it

does not suffer from dull monotony like the Adina Masjid at Pandua. One cannot help feeling the eloquence of its forceful and silent appeal.

The Tomb of Hushang was most probably built by himself. It is the first great tomb in India wholly of white marble. One special feature of its design is the broad expanse of the dome in relation to the interior of the tomb chamber.

Mahmud was responsible for the construction of **Jahaz Mahal**. On account of its fine arched halls, its roof pavilions and boldly designed reservoirs, it still forms one of the most conspicuous landmarks at Mandu. The palaces of Baz Bahadur and Rupmati were built on the plateau overlooking the Narbada.

### Jaunpur

It is unfortunate that many very fine monuments of Jaunpur were destroyed or mutilated by the Lodis after its annexation, but there are a few which have come down to us. The Masjid and fort of Ibrahim Naib Barbak were built respectively in 1376 and 1377. The Atala Masjid was started in 1377 but it was completed in 1408 in the reign of Ibrahim Shah Sharqi. The site of the Atala Masjid was once the site of a temple of Atala Devi. It was out of the materials of that temple that the mosque was largely built. Its plan is typical of most Indian mosques and many of its features are directly copied from the architecture of the Tughluqs. The architect of the Masjid made the screen so massive and imposing that it over-shadowed all else in quadrangle. Sir John Marshall is of view that if the object of the architect of the Atala Masjid was to accentuate the importance of the prayer chamber and at the same time produce something novel, there is no doubt that he succeeded remarkably well. There are few mosques in Islam which are so imposing in their proportions or so arresting in style as this Masjid. According to Lane-Poole, the Atala Masjid is a gem of the first water.

The Jhanjhri Masjid was erected by Ibrahim in honour of Hazrat Said Sadr Jahan Ajmali. Though smaller in size, it is very similar in design to the Atala Masjid. It is possible that both of them were constructed by the same architect. The Lal Darwaza is a small and pale edition of the Atala Masjid. Its style is markedly Hindu. The Jama Masjid was erected in the reign of Husain Shah.

About the Sharqi architecture of Jaunpur, Burgess observes: "The whole of the ornamental work on these mosques has a character of its own, bold and striking rather than minute and delicate, though in some of the roof-panels there are designs that may bear comparison with similar patterns on Hindu and Jain shrines. The **mihirabs** are marked by their severe simplicity; they are simply patterns of the entrances and of the niches on the outer walls, with flat backs and structural arches over them. They form a link, however, in the evolution of the favourite form under the Mughal rule."

Iltutmish was responsible for the construction of the Hauz-i-Shamsi, the Shamsi-Idgah and the Jami Masjid at Badaun. The



Jami Masjid is one of the largest and most massive mosques in India. It is 280 feet in length from north to south. It is constructed up to a height of 12 feet out of sandstone blocks plundered from the Hindu temples. The Idgah at the village Rapri in Uttar Pradesh was built in 1311 A.D. in the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khalji. The Chaurasi Gumbaz is to be found at Kalpi in Uttar Pradesh. It is considered to be the resting place of one of the rulers of the Lodi dynasty but his name is not known with certainty.

### **Kashmir**

When the Muslims conquered Kashmir, they found there a large number of fine buildings left by their predecessors. What the Muslim rulers did was that they converted the stone temples of the Hindus into mosques and tombs for themselves. The tomb of Mandani was erected in the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470). This tomb is considered to be a beautiful specimen of Kashmir art. The Jami Masjid at Srinagar was built by Sikandar but it was expanded by Zain-ul-Abidin. It is still considered to be an instructive example of the pre-Mughal style of architecture. The mosque of Shah Hamadan in Srinagar was built exclusively of timber.

### **Vijayanagar**

Krishnadeva Raya built the Hazara Temple which is considered to be one of the most perfect specimens of the Hindu temple architecture in existence. According to Fergusson, the Vitthala temple of Krishnadeva Raya is "the finest building of its kind in Southern India."

Most of the rulers of Mewar were patrons of art and architecture. The fort of Kumbhalgarh and the Kirti Stambha or Java Stambha of Rana Kumbha are very famous. The Kirti Stambha is one of the most remarkable towers in the country. It was built partly of red sandstone and partly of white marble. There are the images of a large number of Hindu gods and goddesses. The Jain Stambha at Chittor is embellished with beautiful carving and lattice work. A large number of buildings were erected during this period at a place called Amber near Jaipur. However, many of them are in ruins now.

### **Bahmani Kingdom**

The rulers of the Bahmani Kingdom encouraged architecture by founding cities and buildings, mosques and fortresses. The mosques at Gulbarga and Bidar are noble specimens of the Deccan art. The tomb of Muhammad Adil Shah known as the Gole Gumbaz has a peculiar style of its own. It is contended that it has some traces of Ottoman influence. The rulers of Bijapur were great builders. The huge city wall was started by Yusuf and completed by Ali. Some of the tombs and mausoleums are wonderful works of art.

### **Literature**

The old view used to be that the period from 1206 to 1526 A.D. was entirely barren from the literary and cultural points of view. Dr. Qureshi has put forward the view that the Delhi Sultanate was

a culture state. Both views are extremes and the truth lies midway between the two. It is true that the Turko-Afghan rulers were essentially warriors but they were also the patrons of Islamic learning. They took pride in patronizing learned men and spent a lot of money on them.

As a result of the Arab conquest of Sindh, some of the important Sanskrit works such as *Brahmasiddhanta* of Brahmagupta and his *Khanada Khandyaka* were translated into Arabic with the help of Hindu scholars. Al-Beruni who came to India along with Mahmud, was an accomplished Sanskrit scholar. After the conquest of Nagarkot, a Sanskrit manuscript fell into the hands of Firuz Tughluq and he got it translated into Persian and gave it the name of *Dalayah Firuz Shahi*.

**Amir Khusrau** was unquestionably the greatest of the Indian poets. He was born at Patiala in 1253. His father was a Turkish refugee. Amir Khusrau himself took up service as a poet under Prince Mohammad Khan, the son of Balban and after the death of his patron enjoyed the patronage of the successive Sultans from Balban to Ghivas-ud-Din Tughluq. Towards the end of his life, he gave up the world and became a disciple of Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din Auliya. Amir Khusrau wrote a good deal. He is said to have written more than 4 lacs of couplets. He was the first Muslim writer who made use of Hindi words and also adopted Indian poetic imagery and themes. His important writings are *Khazyan-ul-Futuh*, *Tughluqnama* and *Tarikh-i-Alai*.

**Amir Hasan Dehlvi** was a poet of considerable eminence. He is described as "musical and most pleasing." He was in the court of Muhammad Tughluq. He composed a *Diwan* and wrote the memories of Shaikh Nizam-ud-Din Aulia. **Badr-ud-Din** or *Badri-Chach* was a native of Taskhand. He was in the court of Muhammad Tughluq and composed odes in his praise. His poetry is difficult and loaded with imagery.

**Minhaj us-Siraj** was the author of *Tahqat-i-Naisiri*. There is brevity, boldness and vigour in his style. **Zia-ud-Din Barani** was the author of *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*. He took a lot of trouble in writing his book and made it a compendium of all kinds of useful knowledge. Barani was patronized by both Muhammad Tughluq and Firuz Tughluq. **Shams-i-Siraj Afif** continued the *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* of Barani. He was more methodical and careful in his treatment of the subject than Barani. However, there is a lot of unnecessary repetition in his work. It is also full of praise for his master. **Ain-ul-Mulk Multani** held important offices under Ala-ud-Din Khalji, Muhammad Tughluq and Firoz Tughluq. He was a clever and accomplished man of highest ability. He wrote some excellent books such as *Ain-ul-Mulki*, and *Munshat-i-Mahru* also called *Inshai-i-Mahru*. His writings gave a useful information regarding the political, social and religious condition of India in his time. **Ghulam Yahya bin Ahmad** was the author of *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*. This book is valuable for the period during which the author lived. In many respects, it corrects and supplements

Mirhasan Siraj, Zia-ud-Din Barani and Shams-ud-Din Abul-Fathih Siraj-ud-Daula. **Isami** continues the history of India for more than 300 years. **Hasan Nizami** was the author of *Tarikh-Muassir*.

Some literature was produced under the patronage of the rulers of the various provinces. Jaunpur was a famous seat of learning and many learned men were attracted to the court of Ibrahim. **Qazi Shihab-ud-Din Daulatabadi** wrote *Hawash-i-Kulab Irshad* and *Badi-Bayan*. **Maulana Shaikh Ishaq** wrote on the *Hekayat*. The other famous writers were Mirhasi Hishnawi, Zahir Daulawi, Mirza Hasan Nashqi, Maulana Ali Ahmed Nishani and **Nurul Haq**.

A reference may be made to the literature produced by the Hindus during this period. It is absolutely incorrect to say that the Hindu mind during this period became sterile and it did not produce any literature of merit. The truth is that the Hindus created a lot of literature during this period.

**Ramanuja** wrote his commentaries on the *Brahma Sutras* in which he explained his conception of *Bhakti*. **Parthasarathi Misra** was the author of *Sastra Dipika*. Many books on *Yoga*, *Nyaya* and *Vaisesika* systems of philosophy were written during this period. **Deva Suri** was a great Jain logician of the 12th century. The *Gita Govinda* of **Jayadeva** is an excellent specimen of lyrical poetry. There is beauty, sweetness and wealth of emotion in the writings of **Jayadeva**. According to Dr. Keith *Jayadeva* is a master of form and diction and above all he is not merely of remarkable skill in metre but he is able to blend sound to emotion in a manner that renders any effort to represent his work in translation utterly inadequate."

A large number of dramas were written during this period. *Harkeli Nataka* and *Lalitavigraharaja Nataka* were written in the 12th century. During this period, *Prasanna Raghava* was written by **Jayadeva**, *Hammir-mada-mardana* by **Jaya Singh Suri**, *Pradyumnabhyudaya* by **Ravivirman**, *Pratap Rudra Kalyan* by **Vidyanath**, *Parvati Parinava* by **Vamana Bhatta Bana**, *Gangadas Pratap Vilas* by **Gangadhara** and *Lalita Madhava* by **Rupagoswami**. **Jiva Goswami** wrote as many as 25 books in Sanskrit. **Vijnanesvara** wrote the *Mitakshara* which is a commentary on *Yajnavalkya*. This commentary of Hindu law has been the law of this country for many centuries. **Jimuta Vahana** was the author of *Dattabhaga*. That work formed the basis of the law of inheritance and partition in Bengal for many centuries. The *Smriti* literature flourished in Mithila so luxuriantly that the writers came to be regarded as forming a separate school." The study of astronomy was promoted by **Bhaskaracharya** who was born in 1144 A.D. **Kalhana** wrote the famous *Rajatarangini* which deals with the history of Kashmir. The other important writers were **Padma Bhatta**, **Vidyapati Thakur** and **Vachaspati Misra**. **Sayana** wrote his famous commentaries on the *Vedas*. **Madhava** was responsible for the composition of *Siva-Gama Stotra*. **Naga Chandra**, also known as *Abhinava Pampa*, was the author of *Pampa Ramayana*. In addition to **Naga Chandra** the

other Jain writers were Hemal Chandra, Pradyot Chandra, Hastin, Asadhara and Sakalakriti.

A lot of vernacular literature was also produced during this period. Chandidatta was the author of *Prithvi Raso*. This work contains 49 books and 1,00,000 stanzas. It is not easy to fix the exact date of its composition. There is a mixture of legend, fiction and history in this book. The poet has given an account of the life and exploits of Prithvi Raja. He describes Padmavati or Sanjogata thus :

Arrayed with the tokens of the King of Love,  
Filling a golden tray with pearls,  
Lighting a lamp she waved it round ;  
Taking her consort with her lovely thumblers,  
Goes as Rukmini went to meet Murnri.

**Jagnayak** was the author of *Alhakhind*. In that book the deeds of love and war of Alha and Uda, two brave warriors of Parmala of Mahoba, are described. **Sarangdhara** was the author of *Hamir Rasau* and *Hamir Kayva*. These books contain an account of the glories of Raja Hamir of Ranthambor.

**Khusrau** was essentially a Persian poet but he was also interested in Hindi poetry. He has referred to the greatness of the Hindi language in his poem called *Ashiqia*. His view was that the Hindi language was not inferior to the Persian language. He also compared the grammar and syntax in Arabic to that in Hindi. In his writings, we come across such words as Pradhana, Sundar Kamin etc.

The leaders of the Bhakti Movement also added to the literature. Namadeva wrote in Marathi but some of the Hindi songs are to be found in the Grantha. Some hymns were composed by Ramananda. Some of the sayings of Kabir are to be found in the Sakhis and Raminis. Hindi literature owes a lot to Kabir. Guru Nanak also composed some hymns which are a mixture of Hindi and Panjabi. The songs of Mirabai in Hindi are very famous.

Narsi Mehta was a poet of Gujarat and he wrote beautiful short religious songs. Krittivasa prepared a Bengali translation of the Ramayana from Sanskrit. According to D. C. Sen, "It is in fact the Bible of the people of the Gangetic valley and it is for the most part the peasants who read it." The Mahabharata was also translated into Bengali. Krishnadevaraya himself wrote a poem called *Amuktamalyada*. His poet laureate was Aliasani Peddana. He was a writer of original merit. His famous work was *Svarochisa Mancharitra*.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

The advocates of the Bhakti Movement in Medieval India were mystic saints who had many things in common. They were non-sectarian in the sense that they were not affiliated to any particular sect. They had no desire to set up a separate religious sect of their own. They were free from the bondage of any particular creed. They had no blind faith in any sacred scriptures. They attained greatness by individual exertion through freedom of thought and self-culture. They did not follow any rituals or ceremonies. Most of them condemned idolatry. They believed in one God. They realised the unity of God although different names such as Rama, Krishna, Siva, Allah etc. were used by different religions. Their view was that Bhakti or love or devotion to God was the only means of salvation. Bhakti implied single-minded, uninterrupted and extreme devotion to God without any ultimate motive. The love of a devotee was compared to the devotion of a servant to his master, love between friends, affection of a mother for a child and the passion of a lover for his beloved. Brahman, whether called by the name of Rama, Hari or Krishna, was the source of all joys or eternal bliss and was conceived as the supreme beloved. God does not live in a temple but in the heart of man. Approach to God through personal love and devotion is the foundation of religious life. This requires the purification of body and mind from all sins. This cannot be done without the help of a Guru or a religious preceptor. Even a Guru cannot lead to salvation because that depends upon the grace or Prasad of God. It is very necessary that the devotee must completely surrender before God.

It is rightly pointed out that there was nothing new in the fundamental teachings of these mystic saints. The belief in the unity of God, discarding of worship of images and Bhakti as the mode of salvation, were well-known in India. The first two can be traced back to the time of the Vedas. The Bhakti cult was developed to a large extent by the Vaishnava sects during the early centuries of the Christian era. The same ideas are to be found in the Upanishads. To quote from Katha Upanishad, "That Self cannot be gained by the Veda, nor by understanding, nor by much learning. He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained. The Self chooses him (his body) as his own". The Upanishads described Brahman as the source of all human joys. The doctrine of self-surrender is found in the following words of the Gita : "Give up all religious paths and

take refuge in me alone. I shall deliver thee from all sins. Sorrow not". Similar ideas are to be found in the Bhagavata Purana and Jayadeva's Gita Govinda. The practice of teaching in vernaculars and the disregard of castes are to be found in Buddhism and Jainism. The Sahajiya cult which is the latest form of Buddhism resembles medieval mysticism, both in its spiritual and social aspect. The greatness of the mystic saints lies not in the fact that they introduced anything novel but in the fact that by their precepts and example, they put the doctrine of Bhakti on a high pedestal which was above all rituals, ceremonies and sectarian faiths and beliefs. They put all their emphasis on the fact that love of God was the only means of salvation.

The Bhakti Movement did not come into prominence all of a sudden. Its origin can be traced through the teachings of Jnanadeva and Namadeva (1270-1350). Namadeva wrote both in Marathi and Hindi. He was opposed to idol worship. He declared: "Vows, fasts and austerities are not at all necessary; nor is it necessary for you to go on a pilgrimage.....Realise a fondness for the feet of Hari". His view was that man does not need a temple or a mosque for the worship of God. He attacked caste distinctions. He stood for re-conciliation between Hinduism and Islam. His message had great appeal for the masses and among his disciples were Brahmans, Mahars, women and some Muslim converts to Hinduism.

There was a parallel movement in Islam in the development of Sufism. The Muslim mystics known as Sufis were men of great piety. They led lives of ascetics and put emphasis on self-discipline as preparation for knowledge of God. They developed the loving devotion to God with an element of ecstasy. They believed that "all is in God". They believed in the doctrine of *Fana* or the annihilation of the Self which means the annihilation of human attributes through union with God. They believed in soul as different from the body. Nizam-ud-Din Auliya, a great Sufi saint, put great emphasis on love as a means of the realisation of God. According to him, love of God implied the love of humanity. To quote him, "O Muslims! I swear by God that He holds dear those who love him for the sake of human beings and also those who love human beings for the sake of God. This is the only way to love and adore God." Some Sufis justified the use of music on the ground that "a Sufi is a lover of God, and as such he stands in a different relation to God from others who are merely 'Abd' or slaves. As music inflames the fire of love and helps in creating the supreme state of ecstasy, it is permissible for those who have discretion."

The Muslims came to Southern India as traders and merchants earlier than they came as conquerors to Northern India. The influence of Islam and of Sufi ideas made its appearance in the South first and this fact is apparent in the teachings of many South Indian Bhakta saints. This intermingling of the Hindu concept of Bhakti and Sufi cult of communion with the Divine produced a type of cul-

tural-cum-religious renaissance which first emerged in Maharashtra. M.G. Ranade points out that the preachers in Maharashtra "were calling the people to identify Rama and Rahim and ensure their freedom from the bonds of formal ritualism and caste distinctions and unite in common love of man and faith in God." The view of Dr. Irfan Habib is that the mystic saints "picked up their ideas from the ideological store of Hinduism and Islam."

There has been a lot of discussion on the question of the origin of medieval mysticism. The view of Weber was that the idea of Bhakti as a means and condition of salvation was borrowed from Christianity. A similar view was expressed by Grierson. However, these views are not held seriously by any scholar today. There is no evidence that there was a close contact between Indian saints and Christianity. Likewise, the contact between Islam and Hindu religious ideas before the twelfth century A.D. was very remote. The impact of Islam began to be felt in India by the Hindus from the 13th century, but it is difficult to determine the nature or extent of the reciprocal influence. There are writers who hold the view that medieval mysticism in India was mainly the result of the impact of Islam. In his book entitled "Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture", Yusuf Husain says that Ramananda with whom Medieval mysticism may be said to begin, "must have acquired knowledge of Islamic ideas and perhaps was unconsciously inspired by them". He further adds that "the Bhakti Movement of Medieval India represents the first effective impingement on Hindu society of Islamic culture and outlook". Although he admits that the Bhakti cult was essentially indigenous to India, he still maintains that "medieval Bhakti was radically new and basically different from old traditions and ideas of religious authority". He puts emphasis on the principles of universal brotherhood and human equality as preached by Islam and the worth of every human being in the sight of God. However, it is pointed out that the brotherhood of Islam did not apply to the Hindus and hence could not affect them. Neither the theory of Islam nor its practice towards the Hindus, could appeal to them as bringing a new message of equality of man. The medieval mystic saints did not find much difference between orthodox Islam and orthodox Hinduism. Hence it could not be said that medieval mysticism owed much to the direct influence of orthodox Islam.

As regards the influence of the Sufi sects of Islam on the medieval saints, it cannot be denied that there was a general similarity between the poetry of the medieval saints and Sufi poets on the one hand and the Buddhist Sahajiyas on the other. As a result of a close contact between the two, there must have been a lot of give and take between the two.

### **Ramanuja**

The earliest exponent of the Bhakti cult was Ramanuja who flourished in the early years of the 12th century. He was educated



at Kanchi or Conjeevaram under the guidance of Yadava Prakash. From there, he went to Sringeri to take the place of Yamunacharya. People became jealous of his learning and an attempt was made to kill him. He was persecuted by the Chola king who wanted him to become a follower of Siva. Ramanuja managed to escape to the territory of Hoysala Yadava prince Vishnuvardhana. There he managed to convert the brother of the ruler to Vaisnavism.

The philosophy of Ramanuja was a reaction against the Advaita philosophy of Shankara. His contention was that individual souls were not essentially one with God. They all emanated from Him as sparks from fire. God was not purely an abstract thing. He possessed real qualities of goodness and beauty. Ramanuja stood for a Saguna Isvara. He asked the people to do Bhakti without any desire and in a spirit of renunciation. The number of the followers of Ramanuja was very large in the South and small in the North.

Nimbarka was a contemporary of Ramanuja. He believed that Bhakti could be obtained through grace. The way to eternal beauty and joy was devotion for the lotus-like feet of Lord Krishna. There are a large number of the followers of Nimbarka in Uttar Pradesh.

Another exponent of the Bhakti cult was Madhavacharya (1238-1317 A.D.). He ranks with Shankara and Ramanuja as one of the three principal philosophers of the Vedanta system. He gave up the world when he was very young and became a wandering monk. He spent a lot of time in study. He has left to us 37 works. His view was that the final aim of man is the direct perception of Hari which leads to Moksha or eternal bliss. Release from transmigration can be secured only by means of knowledge and devotion.

### Ramananda

There is a difference of opinion regarding the time when Ramananda flourished. The view of R.G. Bhandarkar was that Ramananda was born in A.D. 1299-1300 and he died in A.D. 1411. If the tradition that Kabir, a disciple of Ramananda, was a contemporary of Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517) is correct, it is better to refer the birth of Ramananda to the 14th century and his death in the 15th century. He was born at Prayaga. He founded a new school of Vaishnavism based on the doctrine of love and devotion. He ignored caste distinctions. Although he was himself a Brahman, he had no objection to eating with the members of the low castes if they were Vaishnavas. He took his disciples even from the low castes. Some of his disciples were cobblers, weavers, barbers and peasants. Instead of preaching in Sanskrit, he used the vernacular. He introduced the cult of Rama and Sita in place of Krishna and Radha. He founded a new path of spiritual realisation. One of his songs runs thus : "I had an inclination to go with sandal and other perfumes to offer my worship to Brahman. But the Guru revealed that Brahman was in my own heart. Wherever I go, I see only water and stones (worshiped) ; but it is Thou who hast filled them all with Thy presence. They

all seek Thee in vain among the Vedas. My own true Guru, Thou hast put an end to all my failures and illusions. Blessed art Thou ! Ramananda is lost in his Master, Brahman ; it is the word of the Guru that destroys all the million bonds of action."

Ramananda occupies a unique place in the history of religion in medieval India. He was successful in ushering in the new epoch of medieval mysticism. Kabir was one of his followers. There are a large number of his followers in the Gangetic plain.

### **Kabir (c. 1425-c. 1518).**

Kabir was the greatest disciple of Ramananda. Nothing certain is known about his early life. The tradition is that he was born of a Brahman widow of Banaras who left him near a tank from where he was picked up by a Muslim weaver. He was nominally a Muslim but actually his thoughts were those of a Hindu. Although he was a married man, yet he became a great saint. The following account of Kabir occurs in the *Bhakta-mala* of Nabhaji : "Kabir refused to acknowledge caste distinctions or to recognise the authority of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, nor did he set any store by the four divisions of life (Ashram) prescribed for Brahmins. He held that religion without Bhakti was no religion at all and that asceticism, fasting and alms-giving had no value if unaccompanied by worship (Bhajan, hymn-singing). By means of *Ramainis*, *Shabdas* and *Sakhis*, he imparted religious instruction to Hindus and Muhammadans alike. He had no preference for either religion, but gave teaching that was appreciated by the followers of both. He spoke out his mind fearlessly and never made it his object merely to please his hearers".

Kabir did not make any distinction between Hinduism and Islam. He used to say that "Kabir is the child of Allah and Ram." Again, "If you say that I am a Hindu, then it is not true, nor I am a Musalman. Mecca has verily become Kashi, and Ram has become Rahim." G.H. Westcott in his book entitled "Kabir and the Kabir-Panth" says : "His favourite name for God is Rama. Like all his Vaishnavite predecessors he seeks release from transmigration and opens the path to deliverance by loving devotion. The ancient mythology provides him with frequent illustrations ; the great gods of the venerable Triad, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva still perform their functions in the economy of existence. And Kabir has not studied philosophy for nothing ; its language is often on his lips."

According to Kabir, there was only one supreme being although he was called by different names such as Rama, Rahim, Allah, Hari, Khuda and Gobind. God was without shape or form. He was the supreme object of love. God and soul were identical. There was no distinction between the absolute and the devotee. A devotee did not require a temple or mosque to reach Him. There was no necessity of idols, Avatars, Pandits and Ulema. The love of a devotee for God was enough. Union with God could be achieved through

Bhakti and guidance of a Guru. There was no necessity to give up the world. Kabir criticised both the Hindus and the Muslims for their ignorance and fanaticism. He criticised blind faith in the scriptures, idol-worship, pilgrimages, ritualism, polytheism etc.

The message of Kabir and the spirit of his teaching can be understood from his poems. According to Kabir, Sanskrit is the water in a well, the language of the people is the flowing stream. If by worshipping stones, one can find God, I shall worship a mountain. Rama, Khuda, Shakti, Siva are one. Neither the Hindu nor the Turk, neither the Jain nor the Yogi, is cognizant of the secret. Allah and Ram are thy names. It is no use bending the shaven head to the ground. It is no use washing your bodies with water. The Hindu observes 24 fasts of Ekadasi, while the Muslim observes his full month fast. If only one month is sacred, what about the other 11 months? A man may read many books before he dies and yet not be a Pandit. He is a Pandit who understands the two and a half letters which form the word "love". O Qazi, what book is expounded by thee; all such as are pondering on the book are killed; give up the book, adore Ram. If by wandering about naked, union with Hari be obtained, then every deer of the forest will become emancipated. If by shaving the head, perfection is obtained, the sheep is emancipated. If by immersion in the water salvation be obtained, the frogs bathe continually. As the frogs, so are these men; again and again they fall into the womb.

The following are some of the poems of Kabir :

- (1) It is not by fasting and repeating prayers and the creed,

That one goeth to heaven ;  
The inner veil of the temple of Mecca  
Is in man's heart, if the truth be known.  
Make thy mind thy Kabba, thy body its enclosing temple,  
Conscience its prime teacher ;  
Sacrifice wrath, doubt and malice ;  
Make patience thine utterance of the five prayers,  
The Hindus and the Musalmans have the same Lord.

- (2) If God be within the mosque, then to whom does this  
world belong ?

If Rama be within the image, then who is there to know  
what happens without ?

Hari is in the East ; Allah is in the West,

Look within your own heart, for there you will find both  
Karim and Rama.

All the men and women of the world are His living  
forms.

Kabir is the child of Allah and Rama ; He is my  
Guru ; He is my Pir.

Vain too are the distinctions of caste,

All shades of colour are but broken arcs of light  
 All varieties in human nature are but fragments of  
 humanity.

The right to approach God is not the monopoly of  
 Brahmans, but belongs to all who are sincere of heart.

- (3) "He is one : there is no second,  
**Ram, Khuda, Shakti, Shiv are one,**  
**By the one name I hold fast.**  
**Kabir proclaims this aloud".**
- (4) "On my tongue Vishnu,  
 In my eyes Narayan, in my heart Govind dwells,  
**My meditation with Hari".**
- (5) O servant, where dost thou seek me,  
**Lo, I am beside thee.**  
 I am neither in temple nor in mosque ;  
 I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash ;  
 Neither am I in rites and ceremonies nor in Yoga and  
 renunciation.  
 If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me :  
 thou shalt meet Me in a moment of time.  
 Kabir says, "O Sadhu ! God is the breath of all breath."
- (6) The Yogi dyes his garments, instead of dyeing his mind in  
 the colours of love :  
 He sits within the temple of the Lord, leaving Brahma to  
 worship a stone.  
 He pierces holes in his ears, he has a great beard and  
 matted locks, he looks like a goat :  
 He goes forth into the wilderness, killing all his desires, and  
 turns himself into a eunuch :  
 He shaves his head and dyes his garments ; he reads the  
 Gita and becomes a mighty talker.  
 Kabir says : "You are going to the doors of death, bound  
 hand and foot !"

About Kabir, Dr. A. B. Pandey says : "Kabir's place in Indian history is determined by the influence that he exerted to bridge the yawning gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims and to obliterate distinctions between man and man based on the accident of birth. But Kabir did not meet with success proportionate to his zeal. Even his own followers are broadly divisible into two groups, one regarding him as a Muslim saint, initiated into the mystical discipline by Shaikh Taqi and the other looking upon him as a Hindu Avtar, born by immaculate conception of a childless widow and inspired by Ramanand. Kabir's attacks failed to make either the Brahmans or the Ulema conscious of their faults to the extent of reforming them. The average Brahman Pandit considered his attacks scurrilous and born of ignorance. Hence they had more contempt than esteem for



him. Consequently, the reaction was not favourable. Yet the lower castes had now a plank for attacking the superiority of the Brahmmins and this gave them a sense of their own worth. The only unfortunate feature was that many Kabir-Panthis became drunk with vanity and pride. The Muslims also thought that he was corrupted by contact with Hindus and according to tradition Sikandar tried to persecute him. The hostile Brahmmin also misrepresented him as a veiled Muslim trying to win Hindu converts to Islam by shattering the faith of the Hindu in the truth of his religion. Even the followers of Kabir did not always become more moral or spiritual than the average Indian of his day". Again, "The net result of Kabir's efforts thus was that for those who are seeking a common platform for bringing together the two communities or who were conscious of the need for some means of escape from the state of mutual dislike and hatred among the Hindu and the Muslim, a spiritual basis was provided for rapprochement. To those who cared to use reason as the touchstone of discernment and conduct, Kabir provided a plan of escape from superstition and empty ritualism. Ramananda's plan of resuscitating the Hindu community by reclaiming the lower castes to a plane of spiritual equality was carried to its apotheosis and for those who were touched by the fire of his message, all sense of inferiority or superiority except on grounds of moral and spiritual advancement, was obliterated. He also provided a new approach to a problem which is of universal interest, viz., the process of self-realization. He imbibed the moral tone and discipline of Vaishnavism but steered clear of idol-worship, Avatarhood and ritualism. He adopted the Sufi idea of love for Allah but kept it free from all carnal associations and sublimated emotion by engrafting on the loving and lovable God of the Sufi the monistic conception of the Absolute. It is for these reasons that Kabir continues to enjoy high esteem and wide popularity even to this day." (The First Afghan Empire in India, pp. 273-4 and pp. 275-6).

### **Vallabhacharya (1479-1531)**

Vallabhacharya was a Telugu Brahman. He began to show signs of greatness from his childhood and he was able to acquire a lot of knowledge at a very early age. He visited a large number of places such as Mathura and Brindaban and ultimately settled down at Banaras. His view was that there was no distinction between Brahma and the individual soul. The latter would get rid of its bondage by means of Bhakti alone. His contention was that the home was the centre of all worldly desires and should be given up completely. However, if that was not practicable, one should dedicate oneself to the service of God who alone could free man from evil. Vallabhacharya advocated the worship of Krishna and the dedication of everything to Him alone. It is unfortunate that the followers of Vallabhacharya departed from the true spirit of his teachings and interpreted them in a material sense. What they preached and acted upon was that God should be pleased not by self-

denial and austerity but by enjoying worldly pleasures in every possible way. It is on account of this that the philosophy of Vallabha-charya came to be known as "the Epicureanism of the East."

### Chaitanya (1485-1534)

Chaitanya was the greatest saint of the Bhakti Movement. He was born in Bengal in 1485 A.D. He gave up the world at the age of 25 and became a Sanyasi. He wandered about the country and taught people to love and worship Krishna. Wherever he went, thousands of people flocked to him. He gave them the message of love and peace. He was so much absorbed in love for Lord Krishna that the very thought of him playing upon his flute in the woods of Brindaban, threw him into an ecstasy. He wanted his followers to have perfect humility in their actions and have absolutely no pride in whatever they do. To quote him, "Krishna dwells in every soul and therefore give respect to others, without seeking any for himself." Again, "Neither do I want followers, nor wealth, nor learning nor poetical powers. Give unto my soul a bit of devotion for Thee. Great pride never produces any good. How will He who is called the vanquisher of the proud bear with your pride?" Chaitanya had too much of love for the poor and the weak. Whenever he saw their sorrows, his heart melted with pity. He was opposed to the caste system and believed in the universal brotherhood of man. His conviction was that the name of Lord Krishna did not know the barriers of caste and race. Haridas was one of the followers of Chaitanya and he was an outcaste. He asked Chaitanya not to touch him and while embracing him, Chaitanya observed: "You have dedicated yourself to me; that body of yours is mine in every respect; the all-sacrificing and all-loving spirit dwells in it; it is holy as a temple. Why should you consider yourself unclean?" That was the reason why both the high and low followed Chaitanya.

Love is the watchword of the cult of Chaitanya. To quote him, "Every man must offer body and soul to Him, and must disdain his personal gratifications. He must be prepared to carry out his Lord's will and in doing so must not shrink from any sacrifice. He will worship his image, he must talk of him, he must wreath flowers for him, he must burn incense and wave the Chamaris in his temple and offer his services day and night to the Lord and to the world as well. Vaishnavism, it must be repeated, is not the religion of the recluse, nor is it a non-proselytising creed."

Chaitanya gave the following advice to the religious teachers: "Do not take too many disciples, do not abuse gods worshipped by other peoples and their scriptures, do not read too many books and do not pose as a teacher continually criticising and elucidating religious views. Take profit and loss in the same light. Do not stay there where Vaishnava is abused. Do not listen to village tales. Do not by your speech or thought cause pain to a living thing. Listen to the recitation of God's name. Recollect His kindness, bow to



Thou art a river of bounty, Thou art the Giver, thou art  
**exceedingly wealthy ;**  
 Thou alone givest and takest, there is none other ;  
 Thou art wise, Thou art far-sighted, what conception can  
**I form of Thee.**  
 O Nama's lord, Thou art the Pardoner, O God.

### Guru Nanak (1469-1538)

Another exponent of the Bhakti Movement was Guru Nanak. He was born on 26 November, 1469, at the village of Talwandi, in Sheikhupur District of the Punjab, now in Pakistan. His father's name was Kari and his mother's name was Tripta. The name of his sister was Nanki. Nanak received his first education in the local school. It was found that he had no interest in study and he would like to retire to the forest or sit in the company of religious men. His father was not happy and he forced his son to study the Persian language so that he could become an accountant. Nanak was married at an early age but he did not take interest in family affairs. He spent his time in carrying on discussions with the Sadhus or saints and composing songs in praise of God. When he was about 30 years of age, he gave up his home and became a Santasi. He travelled a lot in the company of two disciples, Bhai Bala and Bhai Mardana. He died in 1538 at Kartarpur in the Punjab. Guru Nanak preached the unity of God and condemned idolatry. He wanted his followers to give up falsehood, selfishness and worldliness. He put great emphasis on good actions and purity of life. He condemned the caste system. According to him, "Class and caste distinctions are just so much non-sense, that all men are born equal". Again, "I am lowliest among the lowly ; Nanak is with lowly and has nothing to do with the high". The hymns of Guru Nanak have been preserved in the Adi-Grantha.

The teachings of Guru Nanak can be illustrated from the following passages :

- (1) Religion consisteth not in a patched coat, or in a Yogi's staff, or in ashes smeared over the body ;  
 Religion consisteth nor in earrings worn, or a shaven head,  
**or in the blowing of horns.**  
 Abide pure amid the impurities of the world ; thus shalt  
**thou find the way of religion.**
- (2) On meeting a true Guru doubt is dispelled and the wander-  
**ings of the mind restrained.**  
 It raineth nectar, slow ecstatic music is heard, and man is  
**happy within himself.**  
 Abide pure amid the impurities of the world ; thus shalt  
**thou find the way of religion.**
- (3) Religion consisteth not in mere words ;  
 He who looketh on all men as equal is religious,



- Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places of  
 cremation, or sitting in attitudes of contemplation.  
 Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries,  
 or in being in places of pilgrimage.  
 Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world ;  
 Thus shalt thou find the way to religion.
- (4) Make kindness thy mosque, sincerity thy prayer-carpet,  
 what is just and lawful thy Quran,  
 Modesty the circumcision, civility thy fasting, so shalt thou  
 be a Mussalman.  
 Make right conduct thy Ka'baha, truth thy spiritual guide,  
 good works thy creed and thy prayer,  
 The will of God thy rosary, and God will preserve thine  
 honour, says Nanak.
- (5) Hadst thou the eighteen Puranas with thee,  
 Couldst thou recite the four Vedas.  
 Didst thou bathe on holy days and give alms according to  
 man's castes,  
 Didst thou fast and perform religious ceremonies day and  
 night,  
 Wast thou a Qazi, a Mulla, or a Sheikh,  
 A Jogi, a Jangam didst thou wear an ochre-coloured dress,  
 Or didst thou perform the duties of a household—  
 Without knowing God, Death would bind and take all  
 away.

### Importance of the Bhakti Movement

The saints of the Bhakti Movement gave a simple religion to the people of this country which did not require the help of the Pandits and the Mullas. People could attain salvation by their own efforts. Bhakti or devotion to God was enough. There was no necessity of rituals, ceremonies, pilgrimages or blind adherence to scriptures. God could be realised even by a family man who did not bother to renounce the world. This was a great achievement.

The saints of the Bhakti Movement attacked the superstitions prevailing among the people, both Hindus and Muslims. The people began to realise that they were being misled by the vested interests. The saints condemned the caste system and welcomed even those who were downtrodden in society. It gave a new ray of hope to those who were downtrodden in society. Dhana was one of the disciples of Kabir. He was an ordinary peasant and he rose to the status of a Saint. Sain was a barber and Raidas was a Chamar or cobbler and still they became saints. It goes without saying that as a result of the efforts of these Saints, many evils were removed from Indian society. The saints preached in the language of the people and that helped the development of the regional languages.

It cannot be denied that the services of these saints to Indian religious thought, social reform and the development of the regional

languages were indeed great. However, it must be admitted that they failed in their mission to unite the Hindus and the Muslims into one nation although they did their best to achieve this end. The Turko-Afghan rulers were not prepared to accept the fact that Ram and Rahim and Ishwar and Allah implied the same thing. There was too much fanaticism in their hearts which made such a reconciliation difficult, if not impossible. The orthodox among the Hindus and Muslims did not welcome the sermon of reconciliation preached by the Bhakti Saints. Moreover, the followers of these saints later on set up separate sects of their own. Those who followed Kabir became Kabir Panthis and those who followed Guru Nanak became the Sikhs. The same can be said about the followers of the other Saints.

It is pointed out that not only in their own time but even today the message of the Saints of the Bhakti Movement has a wide appeal and continues to have its effect. It was in the 15th century that a cry for Hindu-Muslim unity was raised by different Saints in different parts of India. This voice has always been well received not only by the people but also by the rulers of the country. "Babur appreciated it, and Akbar worked upon it. Therefore, the work of these reformers was unique and deserves all praise. They had created a stir in the minds of men and had revolutionized social values. The Mughals certainly ruled over a country and a society which bore the impress of the teachings of these master minds."

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